



MODERATVS,

The most delectable & famous

Historie of the BLACKE Knight:

The famous Citie of Florence besieged by the warlike Gothes, and ransacked: PERDVRATVS the noble Gouvernour thereof with the fayre FLAMINIA his louing spouse, and their young sonne MODERATVS escape the hands of the cruel souldiers: their adventures in the wilderness of Apennines: and Duke DEVASCO his courteous entertainment vnto them in Albigena. Chap. 1.

After that the blood-sucking surdes of the warlike and victorious Gothes, had (with wreckfull reuenge) finished their long siege to the mightie citie of Florence, the very flower and beautie of all Petruria: the valiant Perduratus, then Lord and Gouvernour thereof, accompanied with his sorrowful wife Flaminia and his young sonne Moderatus, pressed in despite of the mercilesse foes vnto the fieldes therunto adiacent. And albeit the beautifull Phoebus had (for very pitie) hidden his bright and shining countenance, under the darke bayle of Dame Nox her clowdie mantell, yet the scorching flames of fyred buildings, like a bright and Sunnie day, so directed their course through that ruinous and wastefull carkas (sometimes) of a well-fortified Citie, that it assured them more daunger to their persons, in discovering their present escapes, then the benefite thereof being effected, could promise them comfort.

Perduratus, his distressed and louing spouse Flaminia and innocent Moderatus, by the time Aurora was readie to welcome her best beloved Titan, shewing forth her blushing countenance with a kinde of modest shamefastnesse so to be discovered, hauing escaped the daunger of

The strange Aduentures

their wrathfull enemies, sorrowfully parting with their carefull countrey: yet rather reioycing so to be sorrowfull, (having auoyded so imminent a p̄iudice) then to become Slaues and Vassalles to those cruell and barbarous people. And when they had thus past the boundes of Petruria, they travelled with greater ease and lesse care, yet very pensive to be exempt of such cares, and so to be eased, as counting them happie that had valiantly solde their liues in defence of their countrey and common wealth, who b̄reathing their last, (having their speares-point in their enemies bosome) liued honourably, and dyed valiantly: whose liues were as full of vertues as their deatches were of valure. Afflicted thus with treble griefes, that he liued after so many worthie and resolute men, he wandered certaine dayes in the desertes of Liguria, yet nothing dismayde with these loude Alarums of cruell Fortune, setting her at defiance with Byas, as knowing her mutable weakenesse to be vnable to robbe him of his patience, which was a strong towre against her bitter frownes. For euen as a dwarfie standing vpon the battlements of the highest Towre, is but of a small stature: and a Gyant in the depth of a dungeon, is of a huge bignesse: So a wise man, in what chaunge soeuer of Fortune, is euer the same. Thus not greatly waying his owne misfortunes, being so well experienced in worldly accidents, that he knewe the highest tye of dignitie (sometimes) to be the first steppe to a perduring miserie: but neuertheles marvellous sorrowfull and heauie, for his faithfull spouse and louing infant, who vnacquainted with such hard trauels, and not so animated by nature as he, to sustaine the weltering waues of such desperate accidentes, were now become very weake and feeble, greatly distressed for want of reliefe: and their distresse procuring his vnm easurable woe, his woe their despaire, their despaire his prouident care to prouide for their safetie, supposing it a greater pollicie to dissemble his owne griefe, thereby to mollifie the extremitie of their violent passions, then by any further relation of his myseries, to aggrauate the same. Therefore as the shell-fish Echinus, perceiuing a tempest at hand, doeth ballist and loade him selfe with the sandes, to auoyde the danger of the stozme: so he purposed not onely to arme him selfe with patience, to abide the bzunt of this showre: but also with the p̄cepts of philosophie to exhort them to the same: assaying,

aswell

of the blacke Knight.

aswell with his eloquence, to winne them from desperatio (whereby
to lighten the burthen of their miserable calamities) as earli with his
inuincible and strong arme, he had saued them from destruction,
maugre the wꝛathfull and bloody foes.

The mount Apenninus (which nowe they had recouered) being
thus filled with the Ecchoes of their dolorous complaints, metaphisi-
cally as it seemed, (moued thereunto with a kinde of pittie) repeated
againē their sorowes in such wise, that the sound thereof redoubling
in the aire, could haue resolued a tirant his stony bꝛeast to compassion,
and a heart made of flint, vnto teares. These mirrours of patient and
confident mindes, though off-castes of Fortune, hauing woꝛne out ma-
ny dayes wꝛapped in this intricate laberinth, wishing rather for death
to determine their hard destinies, then for any longer time to liue to
increase their infortunate miseries. Ianus double faced daughter now
cloyed with their calamities, began to flatter them a little, turning
her late frownes vnto smiles, her stormes vnto calmes, clearing her
clowdy countenance with a fresh preparatiue of some better successe, &
couering the furrowes of her angrie forehead, with a smooth promise
of some present relief. For thus it fel out: the noble Florentine, seeing
no other refuge left, armed himself with the best weapons he had, and
leauing his wife & child at a point to famish for hunger in a very plea-
sant groue in the wilernes of Apenninus neere the Tuscan sea, he
posted vp & downe the Forrest to seeke some vittailles, to relent and
allwage the greedie desire of their perishing and hungrie iawes: and
in the end wearped with trauell, and missing of his purpose, calling to
memoꝛie the multitude of his misfortunes, he began with dolefull
complaintes to breathe into the aire, the summe of all his miseries.

Not farre hence, the great Citie Albigena stood in the verie nooke
betweene the Tuscan sea and this Forrest, wherein the noble Duke
Deuasco (who was Prince and Gouvernor ouer this couetry of Ligu-
ria) seated his Princely habitation, a man very vertuous and endued
with great welch, being no lesse a Cressus then a Numa, who at this
time together with certen of his nobles were a hunting in this forest,
where the afflicted Perduratus lay thus wꝛapped in his immoderate
passions: and this noble Duke being now in hot pursuit of his game, &
singled from all his traine, hearing a very pitifull noise, drew nere the
place, where this perplexed Perduratus began to renew his former
complains

The strange Aduentures

complaines, in this manner.

A wretched and vnfortunate Perduratus, the verie Mappe of all
miserie, and a perfect mirrour of Fortunes mercilesse mutabilitie :
the dying shap of life, and the liuing shadowe of death. Oh cruell Si-
sters, why doe you spare him life, who, in possessing the same, endures
tenne times moze torment then death it selfe : and in being depriued
thereof, should enioy life : if it may be called a life, to be rid of a mul-
titude of miserable calamities, and euer-increasing torments : Oh
wastefull and destroyed Florence (sometimes my deare countrey)
which, with these eyes in a small moment of time, I haue scene both
gallantly flourishing, and also desperately perishing : lament the losse of
thy faithfull Lord, and repeate, O ye wacked walles thereof to our
posterities, the valiant and constant resolution of thy late happie, but
nowe most miserable Gouvernour : who, had he not respected with
tender care, the losse of his louing spouse and deere childe, would ra-
ther with his deerest blood haue kept Obiit to the happie ghostes of
his slaughtered frindes, then by auoyding the daunger of death, pro-
long his owne Martyrdome. Ah, but while I bewaile thus my hard
Fortunes, my distressed charge expecting my reliefe, are so pinched
with penurie, that there is scant any hope left of their recouerie :
wherefoze, it is high time I make great haste, to lend them some
succour : and therewithall hastening his vncertaine and wandring
steppes to seeke some aduentures, he was intercepted of the renowned
Duke of Albigena, who all this while (vnknownen vnto him) gaue ve-
ry attentiu eare to all his dolorous complaints, whose heart being
melted with pitie, for pure compassion of their miseries, drew neerer
the afflicted Florentine, and with very kinde and gentle speeches, mi-
nistred a comfortable confection to his queasie and halfe spent sto-
macke, promising reliefe to repayze his wacke, and enquiring for his
wife and childe whereby to lend them some succour also.

Perplexed Perduratus starting vp with these sudden speeches,
like a man awaking from a fearefull dreame, percesuing his com-
plaintes to be ouer-heard, and his miserie vnderstoode, hauing well
noted the comfortable and tender speeches of Deualco, greatly ad-
miring the rare curtesie of the noble Duke, his herosicall heart swell-
ing with inflamed griefe, sent vp such gustes of vnquenchable heate,
that

Of the blacke Knight.

that it dyed his cheekes with faire vermilion, trembling like the fearefull Doe, after long pursuite hauing escaped the snatchin iawes of the yealping boundes: yet perceiuing him selfe to be now free from daunger, and in good hope of reliefe, he plucked vp his halfe lyne heart, being lately entertained with newe recovered hope: and then with humble and lowe reuerence he returned him this salutation.

O worthy and renowned Viceroy, the very lanthozne of true and perfect nobilitie, for that the Title of Honour is alwayes vnderproped with compassion and bountie: is it possible that any humane creature is permitted to knowe and relieue my aduersitie: or am I in a dreame, supposing with my friuolous wishes the shadowe to be a substance: can any hope be left to a man so infortunate: or shall I perish, notwithstanding this comfort: O ye heauens that earst did repine at my prosperitie, and with your frowning reuenge haue brought me to this lowe Ebbe, haue you at last (wearyed with my restlesse mishaps) pitied my martyrdome, and vouchsafed to send some intermission to my griefes: or els minded to aggrauate my paine, haue intruded this fallible illusion to my sight, to feede me with a little vaine hope: but neuerthelesse howsoeuer I be deluded by the iniurious destinies, vouchsafe (O noble Knight) to let me know, to whome I shall offer and attribute the honour of so rare and worthy a curtesie, whose vertuous minde is replenished with so great a commiseration of my wretched estate: and also least in not knowing thee, I should omit some of the duetie that belonged to thy person: and if my ignorance alreadie hath procured a defect, I am in good hope my submission shall merite a pardon. And to satisfie your desire of beholding that lamentable spectacle, and perfect mappe of all calamitie, (I meane my wife and childe, I will no longer prolong your pleasure therein, nor deferre the good opportunitie offered to succour those perishing innocents, in whose health and safetie doeth consist my welfare.

Deualco made it no coy to tell him who he was, and to assure him of his friendly comfort: whereupon Perduratus lifting vp his handes and eyes to the heauens, deuotely thanked the gods, that had so happily brought him vnto this place, to be releued by so gentle and kinde a Friend, whose vertuous and countifull disposition, was not obscure in any one corner of all Italie. Thus his Prisons being en-

The strange Aduentures

doe, and humble thanks returned to the noble Duke, he hastened to
 finde his wife and childe againe, and being followed of the noble De-
 uase, in the end he came to the groue where he had left them, by the
 sound of Flamineas voyce, who, to comfort her childe, at a point to fa-
 rish for want of food, in stead of toothsome meate, she dandled him on
 her knee, and to lull him a-sleepe, she warbled out this mournfull ensu-
 ing dittie :

WHat Fortune so fell doeth foster my fall,
 what heapes of griefe doe grow :

The hope of my stay, is causer I say,
 to aggrauate my woe.

Sing lullabie, lullie, lullabie,
 sing lulla, lull, lullie.

Lullabie, lullie to rest thee, sweete childe,
 with sleepe deere childe rest thee :

It doubles my paine, I still doe complaine,
 if thou be rest from me.

Sing lullabie, lullie, lullabie,
 sing lulla lull lullie.

Syth fate is so fell, we can not possesse,
 the soyle which vs did reare :

Haste Atropos, haste, my twist for to waste,
 to ende tormenting feare.

Sing lullabie, lullie, lullabie,
 sing lulla, lull, lullie.

Thy daunger, sweete Infant, makes me to mone,
 and liuing thus, to die :

If so it be prest from thy dying breast,
 my vitall breath shall flie.

Sing lullabie, lullie, lullabie,
 sing lulla, lull, lullie.

Flaminea breathed out this Dazigale with such mournful melo-
 die, that the very dead blockes and sencelesse trees could not chuse but
 be moued with ruth, the wortheie Ligurian Prince therewith feeling
 in his breast palpable apparance of vnaccustomed griefe, rushed thro-
 rough

of the blacke Knight.

rough a very thicke groue, that detained them from the sight of that distressed Ladie: and hauing taken a curious suruay of this Semi-goddesse, he supposed her more then humane, albeit her beautie was verie much impaired with her tormenting agonie: her little childe was by this lulled a-sleepe, his Amber-curled lockes partly hiding his beautifull visage so shined (when as Phoebus delighted with his line-lie beautie stole a looke thereof, through the Greene boughes of that pleasant thicket) that it dazeled the eyes of the beholders with reflecting beames from this glorious object. Deuasco astonished with the sight of their superficiall beauties, remained in such a traunce, as if with Perseus shield he had bene turned into a stone.

And while the Duke thus confused in mind, beheld this rare spectacle, and wonderfull stratageme of Fortune, (not able for verie pure compassion, to refraine him selfe from shedding abundance of teares) Perduratus applyed him selfe to acquaint Flaminea with the bountifull promise of this royal Prince, to repaire the down-fall of their flying estate, the excellencie of whose vertuous and bountifull minde, he highly commended, and stirred her with thanks to remunerate the same: who driuen to an extasie for ioy of this vnerpected hope, duetie compelling her to obey her husbands will, & reason instructing her to requite liberal promises with thankfull words: & deeds, with diligent endeouour to counterpease the same with the like, though abilitie wanted to make any other satisfaction, wherefore she addressed her speech vnto him in this manner,

O worthy Prince, that on the afflicted and poore remaine of Florence dost vouchsafe to shew such tender mercie and compassion, that otherwise were left destitute and comfortlesse of all reliefe: though no one of all our stocke (whose fames, through the malice of Fortune, is hereafter for euer like to be committed to the booke of obliuion, being nowe brought from wealthie and rich Citizens, either to their graues: or liuing, to be poore and banished abiectes) be euer able to make any recompence, for this your incomparable kindenesse extended vnto vs, yet the Almighty powers (if there be any rewarde of pitie, and regarde of Iustice amongst them) will, I doubt not, gratifie so noble a deede. O my vertuous and bountifull Lorde, fortunate are the parentes that brought forth such a fruitfull cropp: happy

The strange Aduentures

happie is that Clymate vnder the which so rare a wight hath his being: and tenne times moze happie the soyle gouerned and ruled by such a mercifull and louing Prince, whose liuely fame shall be a mirror to our posterities, of wortheie exploytes and honourable vertues. The Duke admiring no lesse at her wisdom, then earst he had done at her beautie, was very much disquieted, when he waighed the hard Fortune of such wortheie persons, whose despaire to recomfort he thus intendeth,

9
[Infortunate Florentines, (if such rare personages, being the ornaments of all vertuous disposition, may be called infortunate, howe soeuer maligned by Fortune, and brought to the highest flood of sorrowe, and lowest ebbe of ioy) comfort your selues, in that you haue already tasted the greatest extremitie of Fortunes malice, which will be a pleasure vnto you, to repeate amongst your friends another day: wherefore, say with Aeneas, *Olim hæc meminisse iuuabit*: for what sweetenesse is in prosperitie to a man that neuer hath tasted aduersitie, or what ioy can be pleasing to him that neuer knewe any sorrowe: consider this, and shake off your heauinesse: you shall be hartily welcome to the best entertainment I can affoorde: for I haue tasted my selfe of some, though not so great calamities, & haue learned by prooffe of mine owne paine, to commiserate the extremities of others misfortunes. Your lacke shall be relieued, and your want supplied: banish despaire, and plucke vp your heartes: for now we will make haste to meete my companie, who are scattered with hunting in this forrest, that we may returne to my pallace, to refresh your wearyed trauels. Therewith Deualco concluded his speech, and sorrowe being banished, they were ioyfull and glad on all handes: the noble Prince, for that so good an opportunitie was offered him to intertaine such wortheie (though distressed) guesstes, hauing the Lawes of Hospitalitie in so great estimation, that he held it to be the greatest point of honourable vertues, to relieue the needie and distressed, of what degree soeuer: much rather those, who were the liuely mirrors of noble mindes. And on the other side, the afflicted Florentines reioycing in their good-hap, hauing lighted vpon so soueraigne a salue to their bleeding sores. And hauing deliberated vpon the matter so farre that they were readie for that time to depart, the Dukes traine
hauing

Of the blacke Knight.

hauing missed their Lord, had sought him verie narrowly, and nowe espying him in the company of strangers, and drawing towardes the euening, they offered their seruice, accordyng vnto their ductie, vnto him, whereupon they all returned to Albigena, taking with them the distressed Florentines: the Duke commaunding all his subiectes, to vse them with no lesse curtesie, then if they had bene their owne naturall countreyemen: and commending in speciall vnto the Duchesse, the Ladie Flaminia, and her young sonne Moderatus: whome the vertuous Verosa, for so the Duchesse was called, cherished very louingly, much delighting to toy with this prettie litle wanton, hauing also in good regarde the modest and ciuill conuersation of the Ladie Flaminia his mother, and therefore made her Nurtrix to her owne onely daughter, the beautifull young Florida: and the Duke also, hauing found the Counsell of Perduratus to be both graue and wise, replenished as well with politicke and ciuill inuention, as peremptory and stout resolution, called him to be high Steward of his Province verie shortly, wherein he so well behaued him selfe, that hee was greatly honoured for his clemencie, feared for his authoritie, and generally fauoured and loued of all.

The Ladie FLAMINEA deliuered of a faire daughter, whome the Duchesse DEVASCO christened, and named VEROSA: FLORIDA, the beautifull daughter of the Duke, educated by the vertuous FLAMINEA, prospereth therein.

Chap. 2.



And to increase the good happe of these newe reuiued Florentines, dissembling Fortune enriched them with a goodly daughter, which the Duchesse christened, and called after her owne name, who was the flower of beautie, and the verie pride of Nature, in whome she had shewed the whole excellencie of her skill. The parents reioycing in the Infant that was so louelie and amiable, brought her vp with great care and diligence, omitting no trauell or charges that might bring her to any perfection of knowledge, or instruction of vertuous liuing: in so much, that as she grewe in yeeres, so she increased in vertue and knowledge, that the excellent bountie of her minde, was nothing inferiour to the rare beauty
of

The strange Aduentures

of her bodie. Moderatus by this time being well grown in yeeres, instructed both in Philosophie, and Martiall discipline, so farre excelled all of his time therein, as Phoebus entring into the Tranke, and ascending in his fierie charriot to the highest Sphere, surpasseth in brightnesse the least ranging Starre in the firmament: for to recreate him selfe from his booke, he bestowed his time in exercising feates of Armes, and wearied therewith, returned to his Studie againe.

Now leaue we these iollie Impes, thus flourishing vnder their parents conduct, and let vs see howe well the faire Florida the Dukes daughter, goeth forwardes vnder the gouernement of the vertuous Flaminia, who being nowe past the yeeres of correction, and therefore minding somewhat to followe the humour of her high and lefte minde, (being an insolent Natur-alist) thinking with the ripenesse of her yeeres to shake off a Pupils bondage, began to picke her peacockes plumes, and to feather her thoughtes with the winges of aspiring desire: for whereas before (by the direction of her vertuous tutor) she was continually busied in some good exercise, now being come to yeeres of discretion, it was allowed vnto her to be her owne guide, whose chiefest care was then, to learne to court it with the stateliest, to decke and attire her bodie with the brauest, & to aduaunce her selfe in behauiour with the proudest: and where Nature was halting in perfection, she furnished it with arte: and where arte was defectiue, she braued it with a countenance full of Maestie: so that throughout all the Dukes Court, her becke was a command to be obeyed: her looke, a Lawe to be fulfilled: and her wordes, an Oracle to be obserued: yet polittikely vsing such reuerence to her Parents, who so well liked and allowed of her doings, that they construed all to the best. And so others, either not daring the contrarie, or els by reason of the good opinion they had of the Dukes vertue, followed him in outward shew of opinion touching his daughter, in so much that she was spoken of throughout all the countrey, and the confines thereof, that the meekest shepherdes in all those borders, had nothing so rise in their mouthes, as the beautie of Florida, and continually with their Pastorall musicke sung Roundelapes of her praises.

Priscus

of the blacke Knight.

PRISCUS (the sonne and heire apparant of LOTHV's King of Aemulia) vpon the fame and report of the surpassing beautie of the Ladie FLORIDA, privily conveying him selfe in disguised sort fro his fathers Court, became attendant to noble DAVASCO: The rare friendship betweene him and MODERATVS, and his successe in his amours with FLORIDA. Chap. 3.

AT this time reigned in Aemulia the mightie Lothus, a King of high renowne, whose puissance was greatly feared of all his neighbour Princes, and especially of the Prince of Liguria, the confines whereof, bordering vpon his kingdom of Aemulia, he had often sacked and spoyled: & therefore great enmitie and hatred remained betweene them. This Lothus had a sonne and heire apparant, whose name was Priscus, a man very vertuous & wise, who greatly abhorring his fathers tirrannies, had more minde to walke the pleasant groues in the field, to heare the muscall birdes displaying their sweete notes of heavenly harmonie, then to flatter and fawne in the Court, and lend his eares to the inchaunting sorceries of poplonded Sicophantes, the fruit of whose sweete speeches, is in operation more bitter then gaule. And being thus deuoted, one day amongst many other times, attired in the habyte of a homely swayne, he posted to the plaines, & there frequented him selfe amongst the shepheardes of his countrey, of purpose to delight him selfe with their rude manners, & rusticall phrase of speaking, where he chaunced to light on a strange shepherd, lately come from the downes of Liguria, and now had seated him selfe amongst these Countrey swaynes: who sitting with the rest of his companions vnder a broad Beech tree, the hanging boughes wherof shadowed and shrowded them from the great heat of the Sunne, feasted them selues with such homely cates, as the stocke of their poore flockes afforded them. Priscus espying them close at their vittails, thought no better time to offer him selfe vnto their societie, then at this present: wherefore, he stept vnto them, and saluted them after the best manner he could: & being taken for one of their fraternitie, he was willed to sit down amongst the, which willingly he did, and to cloake his determination, he counterfetted homely behauiours as well as he could, taking parte of their simple repast,

The strange Aduentures

which being ended, they all fel a singing of catches and Roundelapes, some breathing forth Madrigals of loue, to feele the humour of their sweete heartes, who were there also handsomly tucked vp in their holi-day peticoates and grey frize rugges: for that day they vsed to solemnize their feastes, in honour of the rurall god Pan. And therefore with all reuerence they applyed them selues for the time to their pastimes: and one began to sing, and the rest followed him in order, till his turne came, that was lately there arriued from the Ligurian downes, who also omitted not his time: for, quoth he, to satisfie your expectations, I will sing you a song, made by a Courtier of Duke Deualcos trayne, in the praise of the faire Florida his daughter: whereupon he played vpon a flute hee had, and chaunted out this ensuing dittie:

CAliope assist my quill,
With Sisters three lend me the skill,
Your ayde I craue, I want the same,
For to describe this pearelesse Dame:
Who is the flower of beautyes trayne,
Which Nature made her selfe to stayne,
Her azure veynes on forehead hie,
Doe shine so bright as Christall skie,
Her Amber hayres with wyers of golde,
Trim'd in good order to beholde,
Her eyes beneath her browes doe shyne,
Which doe intrap the gazers cyne,
Her Visage shewes like Roses cleere,
Where redde on white seemes to appeare,
Her nose so comely set betweene,
Where excellencie may well be seene,
Her cherry lippes so soft and sweete,
Her teeth within so whyte and meete,
Her dimpled chinne so round and bryght,
Might well entice a mort-fied wyght,
Her necke the pillar of this Peere,
With skinne so whyte, and veynes so cleere,
Ypholdes a wonder to the eye,

Excelling

Of the blacke Knight:

Excelling natures puritie.
Her Armes, two branches of the vine,
Where nothing els but beautie shine.
Her shoulders bene the roote, I trowe,
Whereof these braunches fine doe growe,
Two bosses shine in siluer breast,
Nothing inferiour to the rest,
They be the hilles which doe invite,
Gaye Venus darlings to delite.
On eyther side is finely dight,
Like armored scales shining bright.
Two rowes of Ribbes so euen and iust,
That when one mooues, the other must.
Next vnto this, the Waste so small,
Beneath her stately breast doeth fall,
That with a spanne might there be found,
The compasse of her middleround,
Beneath the hill, fayre Adons hill,
Whereof in Ida he did swill.
The pleasure sweete of loues desire,
Too rare to be a mould of myre.
Next vnto this the summe of all,
Which as I ought, I dare not call.
A scale of Virgin waxe at hand,
Without impressiō there doeth stand:
Then thyghes so fine, and smoothe as lett,
Betweene the which a way is set,
Of eyther side as soft as downe,
The readie path to high renowne.
Her knee so knitting legge and thigh,
Like Scalap-shell of Azure skie,
Doeth double beautie ioyne we see,
Which Venus mooues to ielousie.
The Kaulfe euen rising iust betweene,
The gartering place and small is icene,
As pointed Diamond Anckle bright,

The strange Aduentures

Like droppes of dewe on Roses white.
Her presse so soft with foote so fine,
That where she goeth scant grasse do twine,
Thus haue I framed her partes in kinde,
And yet the chiefe is left behinde.
Which last I left, though it be least,
Yet for memoriall to the rest.
Her hand is it, her hand in sight,
The glistering glasse of beautie bright.
Her lillie handes eche looker paines,
Embroydered with azure veynes,
By arte such workes did neuer passe,
Vnlesse her hand a sample was.
Her peble fingers long and small,
Tipte with yuorie beauties call,
Shin'd so bright as Titans rayes,
My penne wants skill to paint her praise,
The beautie of this pearelesse peece,
Surpasseth farre the Queene of Greece,
Whose countenance and Maiestie,
Doeth rule the sterne aboue theskie.
Yet curteous, modest with distaine,
That euerie rowling eye doeth paine.
Her loftie thoughtes and high desire,
Are neuer mou'd with fancies fire.
Who so hath seene, let him repent,
Who neuer her view'd, may well preuent.
For hope deceiues each one that proues,
In such a soyle to plant their loues.

Thus the shepheard ended his song, whereat the yong Prince was
very much perplexed, hearing this Saint so much commended :
the report of whose beautie had before this time made a great
breach in his minde, being vnable to resist the rebellious alarms of
fire-burning loue : and boyling in feruencie of desire, with such con-
ceites, as his newe thoughtes presented vnto him, continually medita-
ting with him selfe how to compasse the summe of his desire : which
was

Of the blacke Knight.

was wholly to bestow his time in the seruice of this Semi-goddesse, to obtaine the which, (by reason of the enmities betweene the King his Father and Deualco) seemed vnto him a labour so endlesse, as with Dedalus to search out the bottome of the Laberinth, or to rowle the stone with Sifiphus: wherefore he was so quatted in his former determination, that Venus had lost one champion, had not the fierie God so boyled his senses in the furnace of fancie, that hee was perforce constrained to yeelde vnto affection. And breathing thus hee fedde him selfe with hope that oppztunitie would be a good plea in this suite, soothing his owne vaine and foolish humour, with such friuolous circumstances, and sonde deuices of his newe troubled braine, that hee weighed the daunger (though neuer so desperate) but small: and the enterprise (though neuer so great) but meane, to haue once a sight of this rare Saint, counting it a life to dye in the demaunde of such a Jewell, and an honour to bestowe the flowre of his youth in the seruice of such a peerelesse Parragon: Wherefore, resting vpon this conclusiue Periode, first, he breathed forth manie sealding sighes for sacrifice vnto Venus: and manie bitter teares for offeringes vnto Cupid, to bee Mediatours to further his newe entertained fancies, and therewithall taking his leaue of all the boun companions, and gentle swaynes, leauing them to their pastimes, hee bequeathed him selfe to his passions: for in his returne from the plaines to his Fathers Pallace (making no great haste to come where he might be knowen, before it should be late in the euening, least he should be descrid in those homelie attires) he beganne to tolle in his braine manie odde shifts to effect his purpose, the fetuencie of his affection ministring vnto him a thousand deuices to put this matter in pzactise, no one thought which fancie presented seemed hard vnto him, though ail in a manner vnpossible. In the end after that he had long deliberated vpon this matter, he purposed in disguised manner to giue his attendance vpon the Duke her Father, and so by that meanes to espie oppztunitie to reueale his minde vnto her: which verie shortly he brought to passe, by the helpe of a Florentine, a verie neere kinsman to Perduratus, who willing to pleasure his young Lord and Master, (requesting his furtherance, and opening him selfe vnto him, as assured of secrecie at his handes, whose

B 4

saith

The strange Aduentures

faith had affoorded him a thousand pledges of faithfull and true dealing) did write his letters with Priscus to his cousin Perduratus, desiring him to place that noble Gentleman in the Dukes seruice, to whome and his friendes, he, in curtesie, helde him selfe much bound. Byndon, for so the Florentine was called, hauing finished his letters, deliuered them to his young Master, and wished him bone fortune in his affayres. Whereupon Priscus faining some other occasion of absence to the King his father, departed him selfe with one alone Page towards Albigena, (for there the Court of Deualco Prince of Liguria was) to put his purpose in practise, thinking euery minute a Moneth, and euery howre a yeere, till he came to his iourneyes end, verifying this onely Adage, Cupienti celeritas mora est. In this sort his thoughtes building Castels in the ayre, at last, he arrived at Albigena, where deliuering his letters of commendations to the Prince his high Steward, he had verie good entertainment of him, & made him the best welcome his late reuiued Fortune could affoord. And verie shortly placed him in the Dukes seruice: for Priscus was such a one, whose owne person might warrant him so much fauour, being a man as rare in his qualities, as excellent in his personage, whose countenance was adozned with the beautie of youth, and his behauiour furnished with the grauitie of age, so that verie thankfull was this proffer to the Duke, who alwayes had in estimation and regarde all such toward youthes. This being finished, Perduratus minding to shewe him selfe euery way bountifull to young Priscus, to remunerate some part of his kinsman his receiued good turnes, called vnto him his sonne Moderatus, (who was in good credite in the Court, and generally welbeloued, for his affabilitie and gentlenesse) commaunding him to be acquainted with Priscus, and withall not to omit any occasion that might procure his good, declaring the kindnes he had shewed vnto his Uncle Byndon, to induce him faithfully to doe the same.

Moderatus, of duetie obedient to his Fathers commaund, and of Nature passing gentle, Nature hauing also instructed him to be Patron vnto Strangers, especially to such as had in the highest degree merited the same, endeouored not onely to entertaine Priscus with common curtesie, but also to waite him selfe in friendship with him:

of the blacke Knight:

him (if the sequell of his life proued so vertuous, as it seemed in outward apparance) and great reason he had so to do: for that they were both Straungers, much of the same age, the constitution of their bodies were alike, and the disposition of their mindes without difference. So, as nothing is to be respected in amitie and friendship, more then equalitie: euen so could none more fitly be ioynd in amitie and friendship (by reason of the sympathie of their natures) then this couple, who so much resembled each other in proportion and condition, that scant could the one be knowen from the other. Thus both these faire buddes flourishing in the beautifull prime of their yeeres, hauing in some reasonable quantitie of time, sufficiently experienced each others vertuous disposition, grew so familiar in speech and conuersation, that the consent of the one was a constraint to the other: if Priscus smiled, Moderatus reioyced: if Moderatus towzed, Priscus laughed not: in so much that they were neuer found different in opinion or action: for one chamber was common vnto them both, one bed serued them both, they both euer vsed one boord, they had but one purse indifferent betweene them: and last of all, their seuerall and distinct bodies had but one minde: either of them with their affable and curteous demeanour, endeouoring to gaine the good will of the people: and both of them in a verie short space did in the highest degree of good liking obtaine the same.

Priscus all this while applying him selfe very diligently in the seruice of his mistresse, no where seeming pleasant, but in her presence, her lookes hauing fettered him in the prison of fancie: fortune brought him to such a Laberinth, that his thoughts were like Ianus pictures, that presented both peace and warre: his minde not vnlike to Venus Anuill, wherupon is forged both feare and hope: the sight of his beloved, somethyng easing the intollerable wearinesse of his minde: who, with her rowling lookes, sometimes lending him an amorous glance, (more of an vse which she had taken, then of any fauour vnto him) brought the poore Gentleman to such a fooles paradise, that he measured her maners after his owne minde, and construed all to the best: thinking, that as she was Venus ouermatch in beautie, so she might be Pallas superiour in vertue: yet the Hatefullie of her countenance, furnished with coye disdain, brought him to a great doubt of the
C
successe

The strange Aduentures

success of this enterprize : neuerthelesse, he could not dissuade himselfe from the same : for as Ouid said,

Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.

Thus Priscus applying him selfe in his aptest habite to please his Mistresse, counting that no conquest which might be easilie wonne, and deeming the enterprize but base, which had not in it some danger, beholding with the fish Mugra the bare hooke, swallowed by his owne bane, and with the Partes of Calabria, fedde on Dictamnium, knowing it to be deadly popson : for albeit that hee did perfectly ken the perill, yet hee was so blinded with affection, that hee coulde not auoyde the prejudice. Hee was sober and wise, yet all that was too slender a defence against the pearcing beames of beautie, which had so benumbed his spirites, that hee seemed rather to be a ghost, then a living creature : and no maruell, though his wisdom could not withstande such a sweete encounter : for euen as the fleetest fish swalloweth the delicatest bayte, and the highest soaring Hawke is soonest reclaimed to the lure : so the sharpest witte hath his wanton will, which verie often is inueagled with the popsoned sightes of alluring vanities. And albeit he endeouored all that euer he coulde to couer his passions with a merie countenance (least anie of the Dukes Court espying his seruencie, might ayne at his affection, and so preuent his purpose,) yet hee could not hyde a padde in strawe, nor so closelie couer his flame, but that Moderatus well perceiued that there was some fire, where so great a smoke appeared : not a little maruelling, that his friend concealed his griefe from him, carrying a moze ielous eye ouer him then before, to the ende to discover the cause of his passions, that (according to the duetie of a friende) hee might minister a medicine, to cure the Melancholie maladie of his friendes male contented minde.

In this sort Priscus a verie long time hovered betweene hope and despaire, fortune offering him no opportunitie (nor yet daring, though she had) to make his griefes known vnto Florida, the which albeit it pearced him to the quicke, and strayned euery string of his heart to the highest note of sorowe, yet he dissembled the same, in hope that the stozme could not last so long, but that in the ende it must

breeds

of the blacke Knight.

needes present a calme: thus embracing the shadowe of pleasure, and fruite of vanitie, he thought the weather verie good for his bar-quest, if Phoebus graced him with the light of his countenance, although the clowdes hauing vnlockt the closet of their moisture, pattered forth aboundance of raine. While Venus now seeing her Champion thus patient, yet almost tyred, feared least any longer delaye would bee such a cooling carde to his que-ſie ſtomacke, that hee would for euer deſpiſe and abiure Loue, and all his Lawes, wherefore reſolved to frame a platte to procure his vaine hope, which ſhe brought to paſſe in this order.

Priscus, coueting nothing ſo much as to be alone and in ſolitarie places, whereby to feede his melancholie humour with friuolous and vaine thoughtes, in a fayre graye morning walked forth to the common garden, adioyning to the Pallace, in the viter parte whereof, there was an entrance to goe vnto a priue Orchard, wherein ſprung a verie pleaſant ſpring, the delectable murmure of whole Chryſtaline ſtreame, falling ouer the pebble ſtones, made ſuch muſicall harmony, that it might haue delighted a verie ſorrowfull man, and the whole platte couered with the pleaſant ſhades of mightie Cedars, Pine-apple trees, greene Bay trees, ſine Cherrie trees, the ſweete Bziar, and the ſtalkes of Roſes growing plentifully in the ende of euery Alley, and on the ſide of euery banke, the ground checkered all ouer with choyce of fineſt flowers, as Violets, and Camamell: the one, the more it is chaſed, the better ſent it will peeelde: and the other, the more it is troden, the thicker and finer it will growe. There was alſo the Daſie, Primroſe, Cowſlippe, and the reſt, euery flower hauing his ſecret operation to procure delight: and euery tree and plant growing in ſuch order, that there you might beholde the curious workeſmanship of Nature, moſt liuely pourtrayed and ſet forth: for the flowers did peeelde a verie pleaſant and ſweete ſent to comfort the bzaine, and the tender graſſe a ſoft pillowe to eaſe the wearyed bodie, the mightie and bzaunch-ſpreading trees affoording ſhade to keepe off the parching beames of ſerie Phoebus, the muſicall byrdes (not omitting their partes to ſet out this earthlie Paradiſe) accorded their notes with ſuch daintie harmony and ſweetneſſe, that it might haue lulled aſleepe the moſt wakefull and watching Argus in the worlde:

The strange Aduentures

the fine order obserued, with so artificiall a proportion, in framing of this platt, so rauished the minde of sorrowfull Priscus, (hauing espyed the same as he ascended a steppe or two, to see by a horologe, that was set vp vpon a pillar in a corner of the Garden, what a clocke it was) with desire of solacing him selfe in this place, that he stood a long while deuising with him selfe, howe to compasse an entrance thereto, (wherein to powze forth his passionate complaints, supposing it to be the Bowze of pitie, the sweetnesse thereof inducing him to beleue, that mercie lay lurking vnder enery flower) in the ende, seeing there was no other remedie left, he skipt from the pillar where the horologe was, ouer a verie high wall of bricke, vnto this priue orchard, hauing his Lute with him, which he brought of purpose to solace himself with: where being come, he curiously surueyed ouer that pleasant platt, not a litle wondering at the fine order of the trees, which grew, scituated diamond-wise, keeping so good a decorum in their growth, that one leafe was not seene to outgrow another: and being wearied in tracing vp and downe amongst the pleasant groues, he rested himselfe in a fine Arbour, seated in a close thicket, neere that murmuring fountaine, where he beganne to powze forth his complaints in this manner.

Oh infortunate Priscus, whose Prime of youth is loaded with moze sorowes then peeres: what preeuish Planet was predominate ouer thy Natiuitie: or what contrarie oppositions the heauens seemed to powze forth at the time of thy byrth: hath Cupid bewitched thee: or Venus framed thee a foole in fancies soze: or which is moze, the bare repozte of fading beautie so besotted thy senses, and made such a Metamorphosis of thee, that from a Prince of Aemulia, thou art become a bassall and hireling to the Lord of Liguria, a man nothing superiour to thy selfe, and thy fathers mortall foe. And what hath procured this: if loue, fond Priscus, which, as thou knowest, is but a blaze like to a Baume, and therefore vntworthie to be lodged in Priscus: if beautie, that onely is the fading shew of vanitie, much like the apples of Tantalus, that are precious in the eye, and dust when they come to the handling, therefore not fitt to be seated in the mind of Priscus: if Florida, ah faire Florida, howe can I leaue this sweete note: if (I say) Florida hath procured this: thou art not ignorant howe

how her countenance is full of maiestie, replenished with high disdain, not contented to be wooed, much lesse to be wooed by the statelyst Lord of all Liguria: howe then shall I hope, who am her fathers hireling, to obtaine her fauour: no Priscus, no, thou struest against the streame, and feedest with the Deere against the winde, and thy labour is altogether frustrate: wherefore cease this fond follie, and goe not about with a dramme of pleasure to purchase an ounce of sorowe, least in seeking to gaine Florida, thou mayest happily loose thy life: for thou sayest betwene Silla and Caribdis, where in seeking to auoyde one danger, thou mayest easilie fall into another: because, concealing thy birth, thou art unlike to speede with Florida: and in reuealing the same, thou art in an imminent dainger of thy life. Ah, but fond Priscus where art thou carryed with these vaine and foolish imaginations: dost thou not venture thy life for loue, whose heastes the goddes themselves were subiect vnto: therefore not to be resisted by thee. And what further, dost thou not hazarde thy person for beautie: a thing diuine, which the stoutest champions in the worlde did honour with obedience, and obey with reuerence, therefore to be had in admiration of Priscus, rather then to be disobeyed. And last, dost thou not enter into this Laberinth of mishappes, instimulated by the loue and beauty of Florida, who although she be full of Maiestie and coyne, yet her countenance is tempered with modest grauitie, and vertuous behaviour. And what though she will not be wooed by any Ligurian Courtier, that doeth not argue that she will dye a mayde: for it is not because she will not loue, but for that she seeth none worthe her loue. And notwithstanding that Priscus is her Fathers hireling, yet he is a Prince, and Florida no doubt will like and loue him the better, when she vnderstandeth that he hath thus embased him selfe for her sake. Ah, but Priscus, Florida is wise, and will followe her Fathers counsell, and then no hope left for thee. She is fayre, and therefore thou oughtest to feare her the more: euen as the Bees doe the tree Alpina, which deeme so beautifull a thing can not be without some hidden mischiese. Tush, he that will not handle a knife to cut his meate, because another did cut his finger with it: or dare not come neere the fire to warme him selfe, because it burned one, shall goe to bed with colde feete, and an emptie bellie: and therefore feare not to proue

The strange Aduentures

thy fate, seeing that thou camest so farre to trie thy fortune. Florida is beautifull, and therefore pitifull: she is vertuous, and therefore will rewarde thy constancie: let thy whole minde ayme at Florida, onely Florida, no, none but Florida.

Priscus hereupon breathing, made a long period, so that wearied with these his mournefull complaints, hauing slept verie little the night before, he was with the sweete harmonie of the birdes, and pleasant murmure of the spring, brought to a slumber. By this time (Florida, who alwayes vied this place, to recreate her selfe alone till dinner time) yssued out of her Closet, through a Posterne doore, to this priuie Dycharde, and so comming to the fountaine side, began to spread her golden haire, that shined like Titans rayes, ouer her shoulders, and to dippe her Lillie-white feete in that murmuring streame, uncovering her bodie vnto that place, which for modesties sake is wout to be namelesse. And as she was thus sitting in a seate, carued out of the fine marble, almost readie with Narcissus to embrace her owne shadowe, so much she delighted in viewing her selfe in the cleere water, Priscus affright with some strange vision suddenly awaked, and calling to memorie where he was, with the behermencie of his late passions, he tooke his Lute in his hand, the sound whereof, at the first touch, Florida heard, much maruelling what it might meane, supposing no man to be so bolde to enter vnto that place, without her knowledge: yet quietly remaining as before, to vnderstand the sequell thereof, Priscus by this hauing tuned his instrument, began with muscicall and sweete harmonie to warble forth this ensuing Dittie.

WHen lordlie Titan in his chiefeft pride,
Ouer-spread Auroraes blushing countenance,
And Triton on his grayish steedes did ride,
In calmed Seas, on waues the Nayades daunce.
No duskie vapour couer'd the welkin cleer'd,
phœbus (discouering ay the heauens) appear'd.

Here Iupiter presented no escape,
Then watcht by Argus hundreth waking eyes,

The

Of the blacke Knight.

The Syrens then transformed no mans shape,
Nor to intrappe layd foorth their watching spyes,
And Proteus in his wonted shape remain'd,
For Nature would that nothing should be stayn'd,

Princes then walkt abroad for their delight,
Courtiers attend vpon their princes trayne,
Of tempestes Sea-men were not then affright,
The husbandman did hardly plye his gayne,
Dame Flora eke did couer the earth with greene,
Procuring hope most liuely to be seene,

Minerua then the Chaos did vnfolde,
Of these so farre vnordered terrene thinges,
That in good order you might all beholde,
Truss'd in a fardell vnder Fortunes winges,
Well may I crie alacke and well away,
That Fortune frayle did beare so great a sway.

It was the rusticke Goddes festiuall day,
When shepheardes quaint doe frolicke with their mates,
With stones blacke that time well marke I may,
For then begun all my disaster fates.
Then with a smile fell fate did couer a fraude,
To perfect which, Beautie made Fame her bawde.

Fame carefull then for to perfourme her charge,
Sounding due prayse, redoubled in mine care,
Venus ouer-match, she blazed then at large,
Which stroke my bodie in a quivering feare,
This rare reporte being heard, I wish to see,
If earthly Wightes affoorded such a see,

I came, I sawe, nowe Cæsars fate I want,
For to ouercome: wherein I may dispayre,
Her statelic lookes my hoped hap doeth scant,

The strange Aduentures

And day by day doeth still my ioyes impayre,
For that my minde lyeth in her princely bowre,
Whose beautie doeth excell Loues paramour.

A liuing minde in dying corpes I haue,
My bodie here, my minde with her doeth stay,
A speedie death, if her I loose, I craue,
Whose sweete consent is euen that blisse-full Boy,
Which onely is the harbour of my rest,
In whose high thoughtes I wish to bulde my nest.

Thou glistening Phoebus, hide thy shining face,
If euer thou view'st the beautie of this Dame,
Her brightsome hew will sure thy lightes disgrace,
The rarest wyght by her may blush for shame,
Whose glorious lookes doe still present a iarre,
Twixt fire and water there lyeth peace and warre.

O would I might (but what thereon may fall,
I knowe not well) once compasse her goodwill:
Or that I had not (nowe too late I call
The thing farre past) her knowne my ioyes to spill,
Then had I liu'd and ledde a quiet life,
Where nowe I pine with pure tormenting strife.

Sure shall desert there merite but disdaine,
Where high desire doeth lodge in loftie thought,
Seeing Loue and Fate doe still conspire my paine,
Voyde of all hope, I count my toyle for nought,
Yet naythlesse hope for to obtaine thy loue,
Not fearing aye the thing thou neuer didst prooue.

And therewithall starting vp from the Arbour where he late, to
recreate him selfe with walking: he presently espyed Florida
bathing her selfe in the well: the sight of which glorious object
so benumbed his senses, that hee remained in a trembling feare,
hauing

of the blacke Knight:

hauing discovered so great a priuite: least, as Acteon (for such like offence) was of Diana turned into a Stagge, whose owne whelpes hunted him to the death: so he, for so great and vnadvised an oversight, should be transformed to some newe shape, his continuall passions being the deuouring houndes, which should persecute him to destruction. So long remained Priscus in this traunce, that Florida had recovered her feete, and like Iuno with her pompous trayne, pacing so maiestically towardes him, that she did put the poore Gentleman into a great admiration of her loftie and Princelie demeanour, and being come vnto him, she beganne thus to reprehend him for his boldnesse, in presuming to enter vnto that place, that was onely for her recreation.

What Priscus: whether was it folly or presumption that moued thee thus vnadvisedly to intrude thy selfe vnto this place, without my knowledge, forbidden to all but Florida, and licenced to none but Florida. Why hast thou bene so bolde, to offer thy selfe to so great a secrecie: dost thou not knowe howe Acteon was handled, for discovering the secretes of Diana: and why oughtest thou to hope for better Fortune then he: thy discent is lesse, and thy offence as great, it may be, because I fauoured thee, for the shewe of vertue that was in thee, that wresting my meaning to another text, seruing thine owne purpose, thou hast thus presumed to trie my patience: well, now I see that the richest Sepulchre hath but rotten bones within, and a fine scabbard sometimes a rustie blade: and dissembling hypocrites, fayre and smoothe countenances, but rough and deceitfull heartes, much like the hearbe Phanaces, that hath a sweete budde and a bitter fruit, or the Bathes of Calicut, that be as cleere as Padus, and as pestilent as Orme: so thou, couering thy malicious minde with counterfeiting modestie, and thy Wolfes paunch with a Lambes skinne, staying only for opportunitie to put in execution some mischieuous determination. Wherefore, fond Nouice, depart hence with shame: for with great shame mayest thou depart, that hast committed so immodest a facte whereupon Florida, being in a great rage, would haue departed, had not Priscus (now stirred by with this sharpe reprehension) stayed her passage with this replie.

Sweete and gentle Distresse, if either my ignorance (by reason of

D

my

The strange Aduentures

my late coming to your fathers Court) might p[re]iudice my offence: hauing unwittingly, though willingly, committed the same: or the acknowledging of my fault (with a submission, readie to receiue any punishment that you would censure or adiudge me vnto) pacifie your late conceiued displeasure towards me: the one doeth manifestly appeare to excuse my crime: for the other, I prostrate my selfe in your presence, and wholly referre me to your grace, as one wishing rather to die, then to displease you, and desiring no longer to liue, then it may stand with your gracious pleasure to graunt me libertie: for be it spoken without dissimulation, in your handes lyeth the sentence of my life or death, and gladlyer would I dye by your doome, then liue one minute to procure your discontent: wherefore I humbly beseech you, that it might rest with your liking, deere Ladie, to licente me to reueale vnto you, the dolorous and secrete anguish of my tormenting heart, which lyeth drowned in the denne of despaire, without your sweete consent, to ease the same: for as water stoppt, maketh the greater deluge: & fire suppress, bursteth into a more vehement flame: so my griefes concealed, breed such a sharpe corrosion in my heart, that without your sweete consent giue care to my passions, I am vnlke euer to be rid of my paine. Florida well perceiuing by this, vpon what string Priscus harped, she did cut him off in the midst of his tale, thus:

Why how nowe Priscus, hath the gloriousnesse of the place made such a metamorphosis of you, that it bereaued you of your senses, and giuen you vnto a frenzie: or some other vaine humour hammered in your head so high a determination: take heede, least with the people Hyperborei, you gaze so long vpon the sunne, till you become blinde, or soothing your selfe in the sweetenesse of your follie, you resemble the Leopards that feed on Bargerain, knowing it to be their owne bane. What, fond Priscus, dost thou eye Florida: can nothing content thee but the beautie of Florida: hath thy presumption growen vpon my gentlenesse towards thee, desiring alwayes to be noted rather modest surteous, then ouer-curious vnto Strangers: or hast thou noted so much lightnesse in me, that might warrant thee any hope to obtaine my good will: No, I trowe, Florida is not so lauish of her honour, nor yet so base minded, as to looke vpon her Fathers hireling. What you rude Pincocks, deeme you any thing in your selfe worthe of Floridas

Of the blacke Knight.

Floridas loue : or wantes any perfection in Florida, to deserue the fauour and liking of the mightiest Prince vnder the Sunne : wherefore content thy selfe Priscus, with this, that Florida allowes of thee, as her fathers bassall, and likes of thee as a diligent seruant, and fauours thee after her wonted curtesie, as thou art a Stranger : and for thy offence, because thou pleadest both ignorance in committing the crime, and also submission for amendes : either of which might for this time satisfie Florida, so that this may be a warning, that hereafter you enter not so vnadvisedly to any such vnlawfull attempts.

Priscus moane, after Florida gaue him the repulse : his Madrigale, and secrete complaint, which MODERATVS his friend ouer-heard. MODERATVS exhortation and comfort vnto him. PRISCVS discovering of him selfe, his Parents, and countrey to MODERATVS, which before this time he concealed, and MODERATVS promise to effect his desired amours. Chap: 4.

PRiscus, albeit this sharpe answere had giuen him almost to the wall, yet like a stout souldier, he did not meane to forsake the fox for one heauie skirmige, being such a one, as was not to seeke for answere, the readinesse of whose witte, alwayes assured his plea to be good and sufficient in Venus Court : and thus, as he was readie to speake further for him selfe, there entred in at the Posterne doore one of Floridas gentlewomen, which she perceiuing, flung away from him, and returned to the Court againe with her waiting maide that came for her to dinner, leauing the poore Gentleman in such a quandarie with this repulse, at his first entring vnto the game, that he lacked but little to prooue a Waggard. And now seeing the Distresse of his thoughtes had thus giuen him the slippe, with a flea in his eare, he secretly conueyed him selfe vnto his chamber. And by reason it was now dinner time, he had verie good opportunitie to repaire there vnknown to any, where when he came, breathing forth a number of scalding sighes, he cast him selfe vpon his bed, and after he had there tossed him selfe a while, being vncapable of any rest, he tooke his Lute in his hand, to see, if with musicke he could moderate his melancholie, and mollifie some of his heauie passions : and so, like the swaine at the point of death, he verie dolefully chaunted ouer this Can song.

When

The strange Aduentures

WHen Phosphorus declining West her tracke,
Commaunding Nox her charge to take in hand
And for to spread abroad her curtaine blacke,
By Natures course to couer both sea and land:
Then at her becke a clowdie vale in stept,
And terrene thinges quite from our sight hath swept

By this had Phoebus clearely made escape,
And Vesperus his action did assoyne,
Of Thetis Queene then cloyed with the rape,
With Lucina in coiture doeth ioyne:
From whome he cleerely receiu'd away his light,
Least she should blush, being seene in such a plight.

Lucina then her budding hornes did stretch,
And borrowing of her Louer light, appeares,
When Morpheus presented to me poore wretch,
A sight, which still my dulled senses cheeres:
Ah cheeres: a wofull cheere: woe worth the time,
That makes me thus to spend my golden prime.

What fancie moou'd, folly did put in vre,
And Queene Desire did straight appoint the game,
Which once begunne, no hope could helpe procure,
Beefore I loose, to giue it ouer were shame:
Although Dispayre doeth say that I shall gaine,
Nought for my toyle, but heapes of cruell paine.

Cupid then smyl'd such Clyent to possesse,
And thank'd Morpheus that procur'd the same,
Venus mislikte I should rest in distresse,
Least after I would ay renounce her game,
Shee fitted me, with opportunitie
To speake: alas I spake: all would not be.

All would not be, what then: ah dolefull chaunce,

Haue

Of the blacke Knight.

Haue all the Fates confederated my fall :
Yes, yes : too soone I did my Barke out launce,
And eke commit my sayle to windes a thrall :
Wherefore rowe backe thy barge to natiue porte.
In earnest end, what thou begun in sport,

That thou begun in sport : a heauie sport,
Which is the worker of thy great annoye,
Thou canst not long endure in such a sort,
Exempt from hope of any earthly ioye :
Vnlesse the Saint, that wrought this deepe distresse,
Pityes thy panges; and doe thy paynes redresse,

Thy paines redresse, if not forthwith, too late,
For Phebe thrice her wasted hornes renew'd,
Since I was forc't by spitefull frowning fate,
To come and seeke the fight I latelie view'd,
Which viewe my paines, so destinie assign'd,
For at her handes no hope of grace I finde.

No hope of grace I finde, woe me therefore,
Without whose grace my life can not endure,
Oh that I were not as I was of yore,
Free from the scathe which doeth my harme assure,
Then would I keepe my finger from the fire,
And quite renounce the Lawes of fond desire.

Offond desire the Lawe, oh lawlesse Lawe,
Which doeth extreemes combine and ioyne in wrong,
And ministreth pilles, which will not from the mawe,
This from the eye, not from desert is sprung,
A fickle Iudge for to discerne the right,
Which blinded is with force of beauties might,

The force of beauties might : a power-full might,
Which can compell the proudest to obey,

Whose

The strange Aduentures

Whose meere report hath brought me to this plight,
Deuoyd of hope : for sorrowe beares the sway.

Wherefore as Fame me forc't this paine to prooue,
There I began, and there will ende my loue.

HErewithall Priscus ended his song, his musicke preuailling no
more to moderate his melancholy, then oile to quench the flame:
and therefore in a verie frantike moode, he threw away his lute,
& began a-fresh to tolle himselfe vpon his bed, resting as wearie in his
bodie, as he was afflicted in his mind : and thus perplexed in his dis-
quiet passions, tormenting him selfe with his ceaselesse complaints,
his friend Moderatus, by chance ouer-hearing his secret passions, pu-
shed open the doore, and entred the chamber : whereat Priscus start
vp, looking so pale, as if he had bene newe risen from his graue, his
swelling heart, remooued from her naturall place, was now ascended
to the straight passage betweene the bodie and the head, and there kept
the same so close, that he (for want of breath) was vnable to utter any
one worde: wheretupon Moderatus, his heart bleeding for very griefe
of his friendes distresse, began thus mildely to reprobend him, both for
that he had concealed his fancies from him, and also because he did suf-
fer him selfe to be so ouer-mastred with follies.

My deare Priscus, if the faithfull league of true friendship, knit vp
betweene vs, had not sufficiently authozised, nay rather commanded
me (to preuent your further harme) to be thus bolde with you, I
would scant haue presumed to interrupt your muses with my presence
at this time : for hauing long litchence perceiued in you some alterati-
on and disquietnes of mind, wrought by the effect of some strange pas-
sion, I could not chuse but be verie sozie, in that I perceiued you to be
vnwilling to disclose the same vnto me : who to discharge the office
and dutie of a friend, was by the lawe of friendship bound, not onely to
counsell you the best I could to comfort your misfortunes, but also to
be copartner of your paine, to quallifie the rigor of your extreeme pas-
sions: wherfore I can not sufficiently admire, that you would enter-
taine any vnto friendship, whome, either you deemed not worthe of
your secrets, or els (for feare to be disclosed) durst not commit the trust
thereof vnto : without that the occasion of your griefe depended vpon

an

of the blacke Knight.

an vnlawful acte. And therefore doubted, least that I would not yeelde my consent thereunto, because it should be rather my part to dehozte you fro the same, then any wise to further you therein. What Priscus, if as the Swallowes, nestling in houses, yet mistrust the inhabitants thereof, so you, conuersing my society, durst not acquaint me with your secrets: you should haue done, as they do in trying of vessels, whereinto they poyze water, not wine: in like maner, you might haue tryed my fidelitie in some frinolous matter, that if I had chaunced not to bee close, there had bene no danger of spilling any good licour. But I tell you Priscus, friendship is like hony, that is sweet and pleasant in taste to the sound, but sharpe and purging in operation, to him that is infected with a canker, and therefore finding in you this weaknes, that is moze pertinent to feminine seruilitie, then to manly fortitude: I can not chuse but endeuor my selfe to comprehend the nature of the honie, wherby to purge you of the corrupt humors, that haue already weakened your nature: for now I find the old Adage true, that the Minow, that is euer nibling at the bait, is at last hanged on the hooke: and the flie so long dallies with the flame, that shee is in the ende consumed therein: wherefore deare friend, leaue these fond cogitations, & let not the flilie baits of alluring vanities so intangle you in the net of follie, that in the ende you may haue cause to say, that you haue bought repentance at an vnrasonable rate: at least wise, if it be so strongly rooted in you, that reason can not easily shake it away, conceale not the same from me, least in so doing, the cure would not pzooue so effectual, wanting the true knowledge of the cause of the disease.

Priscus, now seeing that it was no time to dissemble with his friend, knowing it impossible to couer the smoke, that was already burst into a flame, vnlOCKt the closet of his thoughtes, and discovered him selfe vnto him in this manner. Sweete Moderatus, I wonder not a litle, that you would thus fraudulently (by ouer-hearing my complainces) endeuour to compasse my secrets, whereas you might haue ben assured (though that the reuealing thereof has both impaired my substance, & prejudiced my person) that you could no sooner haue requested the knowledge thereof, but that most willingly I would haue imparted the same vnto you. And in that I haue so long concealed it, it was to my most belement and great grieve: for fire suppressed, burneth moze belement, & water stopped, bursteth out with a greater force: so

The strange Aduentures

that the fewe bzandes, whereat I latelie warmed my fancie, is now
growen to so great a fire, that it hath almost burned vp, and consumed
vnto cynders my pooze flectible heart. And assure your selfe Modera-
tus, I was not so suspitious as to misbeeme of your fidelitie, whose
faithfull dealing had assured me many wayes of your loyaltie: and
therefoze needed no further tryall, being perswaded that I had layde
my foundation vpon a sure rocke. Yet neuerthelesse, as you haue very
slicly compared friendship to honie, so I finde your friendly admoniti-
ons, to be so bitter and biting, that the verie name thereof, hath almost
ouercharged my queasie stomacke: for the counsell, howsoeuer whole-
some, is neuer plausible, when it feedeth not the humour of the coun-
selled. And for my maladie, I am vnlike to be purged thereof, without
that the woꝝker of my pꝛeuidice minister a remedie, no moze then
Telephus could be cured of the wounde, he receiued of fierce Achilles
launce, befoze a plaister of the rust thereof was put thereunto, to
salue the same: and to leaue off all ambiguities, I am so infected
with the venime of the Tarantula, that I am almost consumed in the
Iuddes of mine owne pleasure. Therefore, deare friend, seeke not (in
hope of my recouerie) to minister any thing vnto me, which can woꝝke
no other effect, but onely the diminishing of that little ease and rest I
haue: but rather suffer thy vnfortunate Priscus to dye: yea die
Priscus, and why liuest thou to pꝛocure thine owne toꝝment, an exile
to thy countrey, a heart-soze to thy friends, and a bassall to thy ene-
mies, resting thus metamorphosed in perpetuall daunger of thine
owne person: nay, but where wander I, pardon me, good Moderatus,
in that I haue thus fantastically breathed forth my dꝛeaming ago-
nies: for herein shall you rather finde a sencelesse truth, then a sensible
tale: and albeit hope forbiddeth me to put any confidence in her, by
reuealing my passions: neuerthelesse, both to disburthen somewhat
my thꝛauled minde, and also to make amendes for the fault already
comynitted, in concealing the secretes of my bꝛeast thus long from
you: attend the whole circumstance of this my Tragicall discourse,
and with the conclusion thereof, a violent expulsion of my vital bꝛeath,
from this carefull and distressed carkasse, if no hope be left of releuing
my wearped agonies.

Had I pꝛouidently pondered that woꝝthie sentence of the famous
and

of the blacke Knight.

and renowned Philosopher Thales Miletius, who, being by one of his friendes demaunded, how much difference there was betweene a Lye and Trueth answered, as much as there is betweene thine eare and thine eye: meaning thereby, that those things are not euer true, which by common report are spread abroad. For as Maro saith of Fame, *Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo*, so passing through the mouthes of many, every one adding a little thereunto, it is in the end growen to an intollerable errour: howbeit the Philosopher admonisheth vs to beleue those thinges for trueths, which we see with our eyes, and not to be credulous of those thinges which are blazed by common report. Had I aduiseoly weighed this notable saying of Thales, the bare report (bare I may well call it, the croppe being not worth the seede) of Floridas beautie, had not meoued me, being inconsiderate of my state and person, thus fondly from a Prince of Aemulia, to become a bassall and a slaue to the Gouvernour of Liguria, no better man then my selfe, and my Fathers mortall enemy: wherein, like an obstinate and untoward youth, I layd reason in water to steepe, being too salt for my taste, and followed unbrideled affection, which was pleasant and toothsome in the mouth, though poysoned venome in the mawe. And my Parents, which afforded me coyne and libertie in my youth, to worke mine owne prejudice, will be sorie to see mee want both wealth and wisdom in mine age. O sonde Priscus, why dost thou inueigh against thy selfe? it is an ill birde that defileth his owne nest and it were thy part, rather to amend what is amisse, then to aggrauate thy offence by revealing thy absurd fantasies, making thereby thy name more odious, but nothing helping to bring thee to a better forme of living. Oh, but vnto what an heresie am I fallen? wherein should I reforme my selfe? haue I not sustained all this perplexitie, being thereunto enioyned by beautie, which is a thing deuine, and which the gods them selues obeyed. What, is not this the same, that Salomon with his wisdom could not resist: Hercules with his strength could not withstand: and Alexander, with other mightie Monarches of the worlde, with all their forces and power could not subdue? what then, should I thinke my selfe wiser then Salomon? stronger then Hercules? or mightier then Alexander? No, no, Priscus, beautie commaunded thee, and therefore thou must obey,

The strange Aduentures

wherefoze Priscus, since thou must obey, summon thy senses to a par-
tie, and arme thy selfe with courage, to goe through with so notable a
victorie, and be not dismayed, to haue one repulse at a womans hands:
for womens thre napes be but one yea: resolute thy selfe once moze to
plead for thy selfe, & to abide the censure of thy dearest mistresse, whe-
ther it include life or death. Now then, sweet Moderatus, that I may
lay open vnto your vnderstanding this most strange and rare strata-
geme, knowe that thine vnforsunate, but euer constant friend, is the
same Priscus, sonne and heire apparant to the mightie Lothus King
of Aemulia, who undertooke this newe shape for the loue of fayre
Florida, faire, but yet cruell Florida, whose sharpe cutting answers,
euen this day, (had I not manfullie withstoode the violent attemptes
of hote burning loue) had bene sufficient to giue me my deaths wound:
for her bitter and contemptible reprehensions, ministred rather oyle
then water to my flame, and feruent loue, rather then could disvaime
vnto my fancie: loe, here behold the figure and shape of him, that
latelie thirsting for honour, had moze confidence in a speares poyn-
t, then in a Schollers penne: the one, threating bluntly his foe with
reuenge: the other, flattering his friend with a fewe fine colched
wordes, shrowding his malice vnder the habite of friendshippe: then
a sturdie Doyglay sitting his humour, rather then a sillie wall-wa-
shing paultrie pensile: and the managing of a good horse in the fields,
moze pleasing vnto him, then the courting of a fayre Ladie in a
chamber. But nowe altogether vanquished and overcome by Loue,
a bond-slave of blinde Cupid, and from a professed Souldiour of
warlike Mars, become a bowed seruant of wanton Venus, a sweete
Laberinth, wherein being entred, a man may sooner loose him selfe,
then finde reason of him selfe: wherefoze gentle and assured friend
Moderatus, leaue off all perswasions, sith they be but coxistries to
eate by olde soares, and no lenitiues to assuage newe swellings, and
sharpe rasers to cut and launce olde festered vlcers, and ill-cured
charkes, which procure treble paine, but seibome or neuer bring ease
to the Patient.

Here sighing sobbes stopping the passage of his speech, the fire
of his true affection enflaming his heart, and his enflamed heart
disseined into incessant teares, hee languished, burning in loue, and
bathed

bathed in griefe, reposing all his confidence in Moderatus his faithfull and louing aduice, the gates of reason and vnderstanding quite denying any passage vnto such impossibilities, and therefore wallowing in continuall stormes of fresh employed griefes, he was altogether dead in spirite, though little moouing of life appeared in his bodie, vntill true-hearted Moderatus awaked him out of his dumpe, in this manner.

Oh my good, though unfortunate friend, Priscus, howe falleth it out, that you haue this long time concealed this your secreete flame from your friend, and thus obscured the bright beames, not onely of your birth and honour, but also of your wisdom and vertue, which so shined in your life and conuersation, that it dazeled the eyes of the beholders, rauished the senses of the hearers, and stroke into admiration all such as heard but the report thereof, nowe eclipsed with such a clowde of dishonour, as to descend from a mightie Prince, to the base office of a seruant, and which is more seruile, to imbase your selfe thus for the loue of a woman, and not onely to soothe your selfe in these follies, but also to exclude the counsell & comfort of a trustie friend, which would haue bene partaker of all your miseries. But as it seemed, you made still a doubt of mine vndoubted fidelitie, supposing that as the hearbe Ambubeia, doeth close at the going downe of the Sunne, and spread abroad at the rising thereof againe: so I should be a friend in Sunne-shine prosperitie, and not in the darke clowde of extremitie: but not so sweete friend, the operation consistes in the matter, not in forme: and surely, if I omitted any thing that belonged to the office of a friend, it was ignorantly done, and not willingly, or of set purpose: for I utterly detest and abhorre those flattering and fained friendes, who, resembling the Amber stone, burne outwardly, and freeze inwardly: or the barke of the Myrtle tree in Armenia, which is as hote as fire in taste, and as colde as yce in operation. And rather, with the hearbe Amaranthus, which becommeth to flourish in the winter, when all other hearbes doe decay: so I in the winter of your extremities, purpose to shewe my selfe, not onely a friend, but a bright Sunne through the thickest and darkest cloud, being then assured that you doe loue me, if you repose any trust and confidence in mine actions: wherefore, sith the alarms of loue haue

The strange Adventures

made such a breach in your minde, your greatest pollicie were to study to be master againe of the forte, which you haue (with so great a detriment) already lost: and to compasse the same, you ought like a good and carefull Captaine, endeavour to remooue the siege, then might you boldly affirme with Cicero, that *Sublata causa tollitur effectus*, which although at the first it should seeme difficult and almost impossible, yet hauing resolutely determined the same, you should finde therein great ease, and daily would your forces increase, and your enemies strength diminish: and albeit the taste thereof would like Aloyes seeme bitter in the mouth, yet the operation would no doubt proue medicinable & veri halesom in the maw. And if hauing swallowed the bayte, there be no other remedie, but to yeeld your selfe to the mercie of the fisher, rather then so, doe as the fish *Alopex marina*, who, perceiuing the hooke to be fastened in his bellie, biteth off the line about the tackling, and so escapeth. What, remember you not the preceptes of Phocas vnto Louers, who sayd, they should proceede in their amours, as the Crabbe in going, whose pace is euer backwards, that though loue haue force like the Adamant, to drawe the tender heartes of young Nouices, yet they should be sprinkled with Goates blood, that resisteth the operation, and if you haue not the vertue to be chaste, carrie about you the hearbe *Lupinar*, or the *Topaze* stone, which cooleth desire. Weigh aduisedly, what great calamities and ouerthrowes haue happened in former ages, not only to the person infected therewith, but also to whole Provinces and Countreyes, by reason of the ouer-raging flames of Loue, then shal you see how *Troy* and *Athens*, the one being the Metropolitane and most sumptuous Citie of all Asia, the other, the renowned fountaine, and sacred well-spring of arte and learning throughout al Greece, which therefore was called the *Muses* habitation, were veterly ouerthrowen and quite consumed, for the wanton and libidinous desire bozne onely to one woman. Infinite more examples I could produce, but that I thinke this sufficient, to make a considerate wise man forsake the most beautifull and entising Lays, and the coyest and moste curious Florida that euer was. Nowe hauing touched some generalities bounding vpon reason, of great effect to dissuade you from this dangerous Laberinth, yet let vs goe neerer to the matter and speake particularlie: is it not
Florida

of the blacke Knight:

Florida that you ayme at: whose disbaenefull and coye countenance, fenced with the hatfull trench of ambition and pride, doeth put to silence the bravest Lordes of all Italie, fearing to speake, where they haue so little hope to speede: and will you then, while you continue the habite of a hireling, and remaine as you seeme vnto her, an attendant of her Fathers, attempt to craue the same: which the flowze of all the gallaunts in the worlde durst not once make motion for: I perswade me in so doing, you are voyd of all hope. If then you make your state knowne vnto her, howe can she finde in her heart to affect her fathers mortall enemy: and howe can you hope to remaine in safetie, your life lying in the mercie and power of your deadly foe. And as Moderatus would haue gone forwarde in his perswasions, Priscus, who could scarce suffer him to come to a Period, his ardent desire nothing diminishing by these dissuasions of Moderatus, but rather like the small current stopped, encreasing more and more in such sort, that from a male contented man, he grewe almost lunatique, and then like a desperate forlorne burst forth in these tearmes.

Oh good Moderatus, if thou hast no other salve for my soze, nor canst affoord me any other comfort, suffer me by death to ende this wretched life, or if thou dislikest therewith, cease to cloye me with such prescriptions, the verie name whereof torments me more then a thousand deathes together.

And whereas you alledge of the ouerthrow of Athens and Troy, proceeding from the lone of a woman, true it is, but Theseus and Paris iustly made their friendes their foes, by the rape of Helen, who was the wife of another man, seducing her to infringe her faith and honestie to her loyall husband, and therefore deservedly plagued for the same: but I doe indeuour by my vertuous and chaste loue, bozne to Florida, to make my mortall enemies my dearest friendes: and I goe about to seeke nothing, but that (of right) which should be mine owne. For if he, which should by a thing dearest, should best deserue to haue it, I am sure, you would iudge me worthe of Florida, who, not onely am thus tormented in minde for her sake, but also am daily in continuall daunger of my person: wherefore, sweete friend, if thou louest my life, helpe me to the possession of that most rare Jewell, I meane Florida, whose presence is the preservation of my life, and
C 3 without

The strange Aduentures

without the which my carkasse is but a denne of dolours, and my life hatefull and loathsome vnto me.

With this Priscus concluded, (verie grieue stopping the passage of his voyce) so that teares standing in his eyes, his wordes chocking in his throate, he sent forth great gustes of scalding and heauie sighes, and withall distilled from his eyes, (eyes the often messengers of his griefes) great floods of salt and brynish teares.

Moderatus seeing him so impatiently to beare his carelesse calamities, was verie sozie, and comforted him all that euer he could, promising his endeouour to effect his desires, who accepted thereof with thanks, and hauing by this spent a good quantitie of time in debating of these matters, they left the chamber and went abroad, to see if good fortune would offer them any opportunitie to put in practise their determinate purpose.

Florida falleth in loue with Moderatus, her secreete meditati-

on vpon the same. V I R O S A intercepteth her in her secret passions: both leaue the desolate chamber of F L O R I D A. They fall in companie of C O R N E L I V S the Dukes sonne, P R I S C V S, M O D E R A T V S and P A N D A R I N A a Gentlewoman of the house of Deualoyes. P R I S C V S and P A N D A R I N A S disputation of Loue: F L O R I D A S censure thereof. The Gentlemen by lotteries chuse them three Ladies, which should be their mistresses for that yeere. Their Musicke and censure of Loue in Poems. F L O R I D A S opinion vpon the same: their dauncing. M O D E R A T V S entreatie for his friend P R I S C V S to F L O R I D A, her deniall, and offering of fauour to him selfe His further perswasion for his friend, and her sudden departure in great anger. Their resolution to conclude that dayes exercise to suppe together. P R I S C V S departure thereupon. Their repaire to F L O R I D A S chamber, where they tooke repast.

Chap. 5.



Owe Gentlemen, here you may beholde a perfect Mappe of Loues manifolde miseries: Priscus tormenteth him selfe with the racking and restless remembrance of the fayre Florida, being wounded with the golden dart of that little and wanton mag, who, as he is blind without sight, is selfe-willed without

of the blacke Knight.

without Reason: alwayes endeavouring to creepe into the Con-
ceits of the ripest and readiest minde, taking the greater glorie
and pride in his victories and conquestes, by so much as they are
gotten ouer the mightier Potentates and nobler Personages:
thus minding that his Knights shoulde not obtaine any pleasure
without some smacke of paine, meaning thereby to trye their con-
stancie, thinking him not worthe of a good Bootie, that woulde
giue ouer the pursuite for one sharpe skirmidge. And albeit that
Florida despised Priscus, languishing in loue, by reason of his meane
estate and birth, as she tooke it, yet that mightie god (though blinde)
Cupid, determining to reuenge the quarrell of his Champion, that
had lost the victorie, ceased not daily to deuise meanes, to make her
taste of that sharpe sweete, and pleasing euill, that so oft is wont, not
onely to torment, but also to ouerwhelme and vanquish poore per-
plexed Louers, with his inuestigable force of seruent and boyling
heate. And in the ende finding her solitarie, he painted before the
eyes of her remembrance, the worthinesse of Moderatus, with his
marciall prowesse, rare vertues, and singular excellencie, in so
much that daylie wading in the deepe floods of fancie, moued with
the aspect of his comely Personage, which cited her to yeelde to af-
fection, she, which earst scorned the summons of mightie Cupid,
and disdained the crewe of wanton Venus, holding in derision their
teares, and carelessly smiling at their scalding sighes, which were
enamoured with beautie, is now forced (feeling her selfe wounded
with the sharpe prickles of seruent desire) to offer vp incense at the
shrine of Venus, craving pardon for her so long rebellion against the
omnipotencie of so mightie a King. And thus continuing a certain time
in these and such like cogitations, inploying her new desired friend to
some seruice in her owne presence, whereby to glut her selfe with the
view of so rare an object, the eyes alone doing the office of the hands &
tongue, as trustie secretaries, and faithfull messengers of the effects of
the mind. Florida thus flowing in the tempestuous seas of longing ap-
petites, guided by a master, which delighteth in the shipwacke of
them he carveth, and vanquished with an immoderate rage of loue,
the effectes whereof making her forgetfull of her honour, wholly over-
come with this newe entertained passion, being very melancholicke,

The strange Aduentures

and hauing separated her selfe from companie, she beganne thus to complaine.

Ah Florida, howe miserable and infortunate art thou, that the Goddess haue endew'd thee with beaucie, that should be pzeiudiciall to thy honour, and creating thee onely daughter to so mightie a Prince, thou shouldest become an eye-soze and a blemish to all thy Locke and kindred, by thine owne lasciuious and wanton lust. Hast thou reiected the suite of the brauest Courtiers in all Spaine: and nowe not onely contented with thy Fathers vassall, but also canst not liue without that bratt, that thine owne Parents haue brought vp of nothing: in hauing of thy wish, thou loolest both thine honour, and doest obscure and blemish the house thou camst off, which once ouershadowed with the baile of vice, will beare the skarre thereof during life. From whence commeth this newe alteration, and passions vnacquainted: what rebellious desires be these, that doe poyle and weigh thy thoughtes, to hammer in thy braine such thirstlesse and vaine imaginations: ah Florida, what haplesse miserie doest thou finde in this free prison: where pleasure hath no place, till the friendly foes haue disquieted thy life with a million of painefull trauailes: nowe is the time for thee, to resist the hot skirmiges and fresh assaultes of that tyrant Loue, befoze that he hath had quiet possession within thy minde: for being suffered to enter by little and little, he will ware so strong, that in a short tyme, he will be like to dispossesse thee of that little interest thou hast in thy selfe: and then, as the moath in the garment, and Locust in the cozne, it consumeth his host, and departeth away, without any reckoning for the crespasse he hath committed. Then Florida consider, what may they deeme of thee, that earst had in admiration thy vertues, and reputed thee for a second Diana: but the vilest hypocrite of the worlde, that would ouershadowe thy lasciuious appetites to wanton venerie, with a fained shewe of counterfet grauitie: and that there wanted in them nothing but sufficient auidacitie, to recouer the ransacke of thy person, and spoyle of thine honour. Wherefoze leaue off this foule folie, that thus doeth dispoyle thee of thy desired health and contented rest, and endeouour to forget him that is the causer thereof. At which wordes she peeled foorth a number of scalding sighes, and pawled a little thereupon, but againe recouering
her

of the blacke Knight:

her voyce, she beganne thus:

Ah forget him Florida, how farre doe I forget my selfe, that seeke to roote out his memorie from my heart, that alreadie hath taken possession therein, in whose consent or deniall resteth altogether the state of my life and honour. Ah Moderatus, Moderatus, the flower and mirrour of all marttall prowesse, and the liuely lantherne of perfect nobilitie, beautie, and vertue, if we estimate the iudgement of that learned Laureat, who said,

Non Pater aut Mater reddunt tibi nobilitatem:

Moribus & vita nobilitatur homo.

Oh sweete Moderatus, and therefore sweete, because, Moderatus, it is thou alone that liuest in me, of whome my minde onely conceiueh his hope, and the heart his nourishment. Alas, that thy worthineesse should be the ouerthrowe of mine honour, and thy perfection the imperfection of my life. But what, Florida, he that feareth euery bush, will neuer be a good woodes-man: and he that will not venture, when beautie and vertue commaundeth, (which, though by hard fortune they be little obscured, yet like the golde in the fire, wil in the end appeare most rich and glozious,) may well come in my Aue, but shal neuer come in my Creede: therefore I referre the sequell hercof vnto the destinies, to be arbiters in the cause, & rest resolved to winne or loose Moderatus, betide life or death: for his personable and valourous disposition hath giuen my heart the wound, and his vertue and bountie must salue the same. Ah, but fond Florida, Moderatus is too wise to come to the fist by the lure: for he will suppose thy call to be but counterfet, and thy selfe a woman, whose propertie is to be wonne with a nut, and lost with the shell, and therefore will reiect thy suite, and despise thy offers, setting his rest vpon this olde Addage, Soone ripe, soone rotten: the hottest loue is soonest forgotten: No, no Florida, feare not, Moderatus is wonne already: for he that is so diligent and willing to attend thee as a seruant, will not dislike to be preferred to the state of a husband. Therefore burne not vp day-light, and sleepe not long in doubt, for delay breeds daunger, follow the counsell of Ouid, who said, Cum mora non tuta est, subdere calcar equo. Upon this merie pin, Florida was about to depart out of her chamber, to see if good fortune would offer her any conuenient opportunitie

The strange Aduentures

to put in practife her determinate purpofe, when Verofa, the fayre daughter of Perduratus, and fifter to Moderatus, entred the chamber, who miffing her Ladie Florida, and vnderftanding that fhe was alone in her chamber, maruelled the caufe of her folitarineffe, being long before more melancholie then fhe vfed to be. Whereupon to countenance the matter, fhe difsembled the paffions of her inwarde griefe, faining her felfe ficke, demaunding of Verofa what furre there was in Court: who, well knowing the nature of her difeafe, and that mirth is a great purger of Melancholie humour, thought it beft to be pleafant with her, and thus anfwered: Madame. verie litle: for your abfence thus long, my Ladie, hath caufed all to be hufht, not one asmuch as calling for a payre of cardes to play a fet at Hawe, but euerie one making his looking glaffe in his fellowes face, ftanding like painted Images, hauing nothing to doe, without that with Dominianus, they would catch flices, becaufe they want one to inftitute them in their Lessons: for our Ligurian Gentlemen, are in a manner more nice and bashfull then we women, and want rather a fpurre then a bzidle: and therefore, Madame, I doe thinke, if you woulde fhewe a pleafant countenance amongeft them, they would, like the Antes, when the Sun entreteth into Aries, cheerefully creepe out of their corners, wherein fo long they remained for dead.

Florida, fmiling at this her pleafant anfwere, beleeuing faithfully that Verofa fufpected her difeafe, and therefore to auoyde fufpicion, fhe coynd this replie.

I am glad, Verofa, that you are fo iocund, and furely it feemeth by your talke, that you met with a Champion, that either procured a Daffarde vpon the firft encounter, whole cowardife firreth by this mirth in you, or els hauing playde the part of a valiant Captaine, and entred with courage the forte lately belleged, you are glad to bee wonne by fuch a wortheie warrior: but howfoeuer, I knowe you list not to make me priuie, neither doe I greatly couet to knowe, becaufe my litle fkil in that arte, woulde haply make me giue a wrong cenfure in the caufe: but if you come as a friend to inuite me, to fee fome of your paffimes abroad, I am well contented to accept of your bidding, and to view the ende, if there be any acte in playing, wherein, if you be an Actrix, I fhall reioyce to fee your good grace in playing the counterfet:

of the blacke Knight:

counterfet, and after, I will tell you my minde, whether you be fitter
for the stage in a Comedie, or a Tragedie.

Verola was not so grosse, but that she perceiued, that her Mistres
pleasantnesse was but to dissemble her inward passions, and albeit her
face was full of smiles, yet her heart was full of sorowes, therefore
smiling at her conceited vaine, she thought it not best to vize her any
further vpon that text, but thus replied againe: Madame, sicknesse
and health be accidents, to the which all liuing creatures be subiect,
yet after such sort, subiect, that both can not Domine all at one
time, therefore me thinketh that it is verie strange, that contraries
shoulde concurre in you vpon such a sudden: for pleasant disposition
is the Kalender of a well tempered bodie and then, either your sick-
nesse was but fayned, or your mirth nowe but dissembled. Yet how-
soeuer, I see it is your pleasure to make a stale of me, and to frame
me your Instrument, to argue of what you like best: and I am well
pleased it should be so, rather then you should want of your will. And
therefore let vs go see, whether there be any acte in preparing, if not,
in playing abroad: agreed vpon this point, they left the solitarie cham-
ber of desolate Florida, and passing through a gallerie going towards
the chamber of presence, they might see the yong prince Cornelius stan-
ding in a Bay window, which bounded vpon a very faire garden, and
in his company Priscus, Moderatus, and another yong gentlewoman,
which was of the house of Deualoyes, called Pandarina, a verie gay
Dame she was, and noted aboue all the Ladies and Gentlewomen in
Court, for her ripe wit, and ready answers in all pleasant discourses.
Now was she in some earnest disputation with Priscus, whereat Cor-
nelius and Moderatus laughed a good to see them so heated, crossing
each other with pleasant and conceited quippes. Florida perceiuing
them to be at it indeed, stood still, & smiling said to Verola, we haue so
long communed of comedie, til at last by good hap we met with an act
in playing: therefore let vs draw nere the sport, least the best parte be
past before we come: thus Florida, with more desire to make a loo-
king glasse of the amiable countenance of her best beloued Moderatus,
then for any mind she had to heare their discourses, approached to this
merie company, whereupon Pandarina, glancing aside, hapned to espie
them first, & said, well, my lords, I see now, God hath so wel prouided
for



The strange Aduentures

for me, knowing me too weake for one of you, much more for three, that all in good time, he hath brought here my Ladie Florida, and mistresse Verosa, with whose ayde I doubt not, but to make my partie good against you all. Priscus, hearing the Ladie and Mistresse of his thoughtes named, stood as mute, as if with Perseus shield he had bene turned into a stone: and I doubt not, if Pandarina had then followed the chase hard, and taken the benefite of her good Fortune, but she might easily haue ouercome Priscus at that instant. But she rather desirous to make Florida acquainted with the matter, tooke no heede to his countenance, which was verie pale, feare hauing banished all the blood from his visage, which Moderatus well noted, and least his friend should be taken tardie, being giuen to a non plus, (if he had bene enioyned to answer any demaund) he interrupted Pandarina in her speeches, and craued leaue to make report of their controuersie, which being obtained, he stood so long in opening the matter, till Priscus had taken bzeath, and somewhat recovered him selfe: for in this sort Moderatus addressed his speech to Florida.

Madame, you came in verie good season to succour a distressed Gentlewoman, who being so hardie and valiant, as it seemeth by this bolde enterprise, in attempting alone to encounter with three, who thinke them selues to be no cōwardes at armes) it were great pitie she should miscarrie, being charged with an ouer-number. But for my Lord Cornelius and my selfe, Mistresse Pandarina alone shall be the Iudge, if we played not fayre, suffering her without interruption (except it were a little laughing, which we could not forbear, to see their eagernesse in the cause) to combate it out with her first champion, but she might hardly haue trusted vs (to you I confesse) if Priscus had lost the victorie. And sith you are come in such good oportunitie, you haue ransomed a wortheie warriour with your onely presence: for I thinke no man here so hardie, as to enterprise the defence of this quarrell, if you tooke the contrarie part. But neuertheless, sith it is mistresse Pandarinas pleasure, that you should be acquainted with the question, thus it was, or so much in effect.

As my Lord Cornelius, master priscus, and my selfe stood heere in this windowe, viewing through these casements the fayre prospect of this delightfull and pleasant garden, wondering at the excellencie

of Nature, the efficient of so goodly a thing, welcomming in our
thoughtes the flourishing Ladie of Spring, that lately was arrivied
from the boisterous stormes of Aurbie Hyems: delighted thus to see
her spread abroad her ensigne, so trimly garnished with lively greene,
we heartily wished to march vnder so woorthie colours, which be the
tokens and badges of hope, (hope the onely refuge of amorous concei-
ted Gentlemen) as I say, we stood thus in a Dilemma, as it were
viewing these fayre flourishing flowers, which yielded forth not only
a sweete and odoriferous sent, after a pleasant Aprill shower, but also a
rare and glorious sight, when Phoebus, hauing past the Equinoctial,
pearceth the breast of cholericke Aries with his shining beames, be-
ginning to drie vp the siluer dewe from the gentle Gilliflower, and
sweete Roses, that it so rauished our mindes with contemplation
thereof, that, I thinke, had not mistresse Pandarina awaked vs of this
sweete and delightfull vision, we had (at least wise wished in desire to
haue) vnited our earthly bodies, with our mindes, that be of lighter
substance and celestiall, to the euer-beholding of that heauenly and di-
uine spectacle, and there withall haue become humble petitioners to
the Architector of that great engine, that we might become attenders
on the daughter of Inachus, whome Iupiter, after that he had com-
mitted an escape with, placed a starre in the heauens, to saue her from
the wrath of Iuno. Pandarina, seeing vs thus to stand, as stood
Niobe, after the issue of Latona had reuenged him selfe vpon her
childezen, approaching neerer vnto vs, she interrupted our Muses
with this parley.

My Lordes, it seemeth that you are either verie lazie, or loosely
giuen, if you haue neither hawke on fist abroad to procure your de-
light, nor Ladie in Court, vnder whose fauour to shrowd your selues,
from these vncomly and melancholie passions: for me thinketh, it ill
fitteth young Gentlemen to be thus like Anchozites, still in contem-
plation, altogether exempt from Venerie, and Chiuallrie, which be the
two principall recreations for heroicall mindes, both which, doe so de-
test the idle liuers, that as the Bees hunt the Drones from their
hive, as vnfit members of their common wealth: so Mars, neuer ac-
cepteth for his souldier, nor Venus for her seruant, any one that know-
eth not howe to finde him selfe occupped, either with warlike exercise,

The strange Aduentures

of amorous dalliance: wherefore plucke by your spirites, for time lost can not be had againe, you may see the finest flower is but a day, and your time can not be very long, let no base thoughtes overcome your Princely mindes, and if Cupid be your Soueraigne, and that the destinie haue decreed, that he shall frowne vpon you, yet beare valorous and resolute mindes, and with Hannibal despise Fortune, then shall you triumph ouer htr with courage, that so ouercroweth you, being thus giuen ouer to idlenesse.

My Lord Cornelius awaked with this hot skirmidge, out of his pleasant meditation, answered her thus: Gentle Pandarina, I pray you, when you play with your little dogs, for then you are not idle, to whom do you bequeath your seruice, to Mars or Venus? whereat we all fell to such a laughter, that we made mistres Pandarina verie angrie: and because my Lord proceeded no further in this argument, which I thinke, was with that one word fully finished, M. Priscus being a good tennis-player, tooke it at a rebound, & then went forward with it, thus: I maruel very much, mistres Pandarina, that one of so good a iudgement as you be, should be so farre overshoot in a matter so pertinent to your sex, as the seruice of so honorable a Ladie as Venus is, to conclude, that because we were idle, therfore we were not in loue, when as onely in being idle, we bequeath our selues wholly thereunto, being then in contemplation of the hie mysteries of so great a Deitie, imprinting in our thoughtes the Idea of our mistresse liuely countenance, and reuoluing in our minds the happie successe of our desired amours, where as otherwise, being as you would haue vs occupied, albeit in parling with our best beloued, yet do not we loue so seruently: for that then our eyes is occupied with that office, which being absent and solitarie, our minds & hearts do execute: therfore the fruitfull effectes of loue, being either in the eyes or heart, I referre to your own iudgement, in which of these two parts of the bodie true loue doeth consist. If in the eies or tounge, as it seemeth you would haue it, I confesse I am in an error: but if otherwise, true loue lieth in the heart, as it doeth indeed, then in being solitarie, the mind is most occupied, and so the person exempt from labors, or idle, (as you terme it) is alwayes most in loue. And if all this is not able to perswade you to beleue a trueth, yet reiect not Ouids principle, who being Master of that
Arte,

of the blacke Knight.

Arte, censured thus of idlenesse :

Ocia si tollas, periêre Cupidinis arcus,

Contemptaque iacent, & sine luce faces.

Pandarina could scarce suffer him to come to a Colon, much lesse to a Period, but fretting with great anger, did roundly cut him off in the midst of his tale, replying againe so effectually to the matter, that I thinke, if her cause had bene good, she would haue ouer-matched vs all : what her speeches were, I can not remember, both for that my memorie is verie short, & also because the substance of the cause grounded vpon an arte, whereof I am altogether ignorant: thus Madame, you haue heard the cause of contention, in such rude maner as I could best deliuer it. And I dare be bold to speake thus much in the behalfe of Priscus, that for his part, he will referre the iudgement of this debate vnto your Ladiship, albeit Nature doeth binde you to be partiall therein, in respect his aduersarie and you be of the same sexe.

Moderatus hauing thus finished his speeches, I referre to your iudgements, amorous gentlemen, who haue wel experienced the passions of languishing louers, whether Florida was not in an extasie for to heare him, that she loued as her owne soule, thus clarkly deciphering of the qualities and nature of Loue: hoping that he could not be so perfect in the arte, but that experience had taught him his principles, and that probatum est had bene his guide, directing his compassse by so good a leuel, being assured also, that if euer he had tasted of the rinde of the tree, he would reach at the fruite. And therefore hoped that she should not need to be the plain life in this sute, wherein being a defendant, she meant to suffer a recouerie before he could haue time to be non sute in his action. And you must imagine gentlemen, that Priscus was not idle all this while : for albeit his tongue walked not, yet his minde neuer ceased from thinking, his heart from panting, his eyes onely executing the office of the tongue, so that I thinke no part of Floridas bodie was bnuiewed and looked euer a million of times, presenting euery looke with a sigh, and euerie sigh ministring a thousand doubtfull Dilemmas, what the sequell of his attempted enterprise would prooue, so that thus baching him selfe in a sea of confused thoughtes, betweene hope and despaire he rested speechlesse for the time to attende the conclusion of their begunne talke. Cornelius,

The strange Aduentures

Pandarina and Verosa were not at this time altogether asleepe: for Cornelius had an eye to the gallant beautie of young Verosa, who in respect thereof, was matchlesse, and almost of an incomparable excellencie, her vertuous and modest conuersations being ornaments to decke the rest with a most gracious fauour, that this young Saint endewed with all these qualities, wanted her peere in all the Dukes Court. Pandarina, narrowly surueying as well the goodly personage of Priscus, as also his gentle disposition, and readie sharpe wit commixt with modest grauitie, had a great combate in her mind between Loue and Disloaine, hammering in her bzaire a million of foolish fantasies, to be resolved on the sequell thereof. Thus while Moderatus was occupied in speaking openly, the rest were not exempt from secret and priuate thoughts. Verosa onely excepted, who spent the time onely in giuing attentive eare to their talke, being altogether eyther ignorant or carelesse of the fantasticall humours of dreaming louers. And after that Moderatus had concluded his begunne speeches, Florida sweetely smiling, descanted somewhat vpon the matter, allowing the venterous courage of Pandarina, not disallowing the subtile reasonings of Priscus, referring the equitie of the cause to them that had better skil in the arte, then her selfe. And hauing thus spent some part of time in reasoning pro & contra, at last they agreed betweene them selues, to passe the rest of the time in some merie exercise, to recreate their mindes withall. Cornelius brake silence thus: because we be thzee men, and you so many women, we will, either of vs by lot, see which of you will happen to be each of our Ladies, and as it then falleth, so shall it continue for this yeere: that is, the woman shall call the man seruant, and the man shall call the woman Ladie and Mystress. And when they had all consented to this, the thzee Gentlemen separated them selues from the rest of the companie, and Cornelius chose to him selfe for a fained name, (to take his chaunce in this lotterie) Troylus: and Priscus named him selfe Hector, and Moderatus tooke to name Vlysses: and so returning againe to the companie, they discouered their borrowed names: and then Verosa, because she was youngest, was appointed to haue the first choyce, who hauing heard their names, she said thus vnto them. My Lord Cornelius, and the rest of the gentlemen, you haue chosen names worchie your selues:
the

of the blacke Knight.

the first, being the flower of all Knighthood in the world: the second, a perfect myrrour of a true and faithfull Lover: and the third, the true lanterne of all Ciuill pollicie: and for wisdom, Mercuries own sweet sucking Babe. Wherefore, my selfe being yong, the yongest best agreeth with my peeres: and so I chuse for my seruant, (such it is your owne pleasures so to tear me your selues) Troylus. Cornelius, who had taken that name, sayd then, Ladie and Mistresse, you must kisse me for earnest, or else the bargaine is not bound: whereupon, after a little modest bashfulness, that part was finished. And then Florida, who was assented to haue the second place, beganne thus: Vlysses by his wit and pollicie, did more benefit the Grecians in their tenne peeres siege to the Citie of Troy, then Achilles with all his manhoode, and helpe of his Myrmidones, and I had rather that my seruant should keepe him selfe out of the daunger, as Vlysses: and though vsing his tongue oftner then his Target, yet doing more good therewith, then others the stoutest warriors did with their shields and launces. And were I assured of my chance in this my choyce, I would say with the daughter of Icarus, Penelope coniux semper Vlyssis ero: and therfore let my Seruant be Vlysses. And when herewith she had concluded, Moderatus with good grace said thus: Madame, your happe was the worse to make so bad a choyce, but such it was your lot, if it be your pleasure to assent thereunto, let me kisse your royall hand in token of your entertainment: to which demande she willingly assented, being glad of her chance, and well pleased with her choyce, though modestie forbade her publikly to discouer the same. Then quoth Pandarina, (allotted last to make choyce, because she was eldest) you haue so pollicikely vled the matter, that I could not take my fortune, in choosing my selfe which should be my seruant, but I am contented, such it was my chaunce to light vpon one, without any industrie of mine owne, to giue him the best entertainment I can. And I am glad I haue met with one so valiant as Hector: for when all gifts faile, he wi not stick to combat for his Mistresse: and I wil assure you, my Ladie Florida, if you had heard his pollicike and subtil reasonings ere-whiles, you would haue iudged him to be a second Vlysses: but howsoeuer pollitike or valiant, or though neither, it is now no time to refuse what fell to my lot. Then quoth Priscus, let

The strange Aduentures

your seruant haue his earnest pennie, and then you may be right assured, he will not sticke either to speake for combat for his Distresse, with all the wit and strength he hath: whereupon hauing bound the bargaine with a kinde Conge, that acte was concluded. And I suppose none to be displeased with his chaunce, without that Priscus remained discontented for that he had not obtained Florida for his Ladie and Distresse, in whose handes lay the sentence of his life or death, but neuerthelesse he was well satisfied, his friend hauing that roome which he desired him selfe, hoping now that Moderatus vpon this newe accident, should haue a more conuenient opportunitie, to open the matter at large vnto Florida in his behalfe, and by that meanes he might the rather obtaine some comfort in his proceedings. These gay Courtiers being at this time all a-morte, not a word uttered by any, each one hammering in his bzaire a thousand deuises for their newe entertained passions, in the end Priscus verie faintly, for needes must he be faintie that was fiered with such a brand, quaking like the aspine leafe for feare of offending, yet animated with martiall courage to attempt, thinking it too great a cowardise not to dare to speake, at last brake silence, thus: Noble Prince, faire Ladie, with all you the rest that be of this companie, the priuiledge of my pardon claimed and had, for my presumption in offering (without leaue) to make any motion before them, that I ought and doe obey with reuerence, sith that we haue hitherto bestowed all this afternone in honest recreations, which hath somewhat refreshed our mindes with the exercise thereof, yet as the Hyperborei, which be of the strongest sight, in the ende are become blinde in beholding the brightnes of the sun, though at the first sight they were able to endure the same: so we, without some change of exercise, will soone wearie our selues. And therefore to chaunge our diets from these winter nights exercise, wherewith we haue already begun, to such as shal be fit these sayre sommer dayes, & so to end this daies merriment with musike might very wel agree with the quality of the companie, and condition of the time: and for that my Lady Floridas chamber wanteth not store of instruments, me thinketh, by her leaue, that to be a fite place to solemnize the same: whereunto they all agreed, and being come to the place, all set in order, it was agreed that euery one should sing a song with his owne Instrument, and that the

of the blacke Knight.

the Purue should beginne first, and so to succcede orderly according to the prioritie of their ages, so that by this sentence Verosa must beginne, and the text must be amorous, or else the sermon can not be currant, who hauing brought into concord a faire paire of Virginals, which was harde at hand, shee solemnely chaunted this ensuing Can song.

VER OSAE S song.

ANd must the P unie that learned Gammut scant,
Muse vpon Crochets trebled oft and oft ?
Or who of Arte the perfect groundes doeth want,
To iudge thereof, shall he then clime aloft ?
No, no : of trueth his cunning prooues but vaine,
And so herein shall I such merite gaine.

But seeyng your doomes is a commaund to speake,
I will not sticke, (yet blame me not therefore,
If I doe erre) for that my skill is weake,
So that of right the blame is yours the more,
Appointing her of colours Iudge to be,
Who being so blinde, can therein nothing see,

For Cupids craft, euer fronted with a smyle,
Hath neuer pierst my panting virgins breast,
For I abhorre the Caytiffes crafty wyle,
Wherewith the Louers fond are euer opprest.
I wish my friendes neuer for to prooue such fate,
Least vnto them repentance commeth too late.

For to repeate the Louers dreaming thoughtes,
If skill to me had taught the ready way,
Howe with loues frowne they seeme like dampned ghostes,
Were toyled too much, and eke would make you say,
That I a foe were to humanitie,
Therefore with this, I craue excused to be,

The strange Aduentures

Verofa hauing made an ende of her song, made lowe obeysaunce to them all, and so returned to her former place againe. And Cornelius, because his turne was next, called for his Lute, and before he began, thus he spake: Distresse, how falleth it out, that so faire a Gentlewoman of your time, should be thus giuen, I fear me, you wil be a Nunne, if you rest in this opinion a while: take heede, your errour is great, and if you repent not in time, your penance will be the greater, or els your time in purgatorie must be double: for I know well, Cupid is too mightie to be thus scorned of you, who doeth not vse to pardon wilfull offences: and surely, Distresse, if you continue in this obstinacie, I am sozie that I haue met with one so blinded with heresie.

Verofa, blushing with modest shamefastnesse, said, pardon mee my Lord, in that I haue spoken my minde, as by your commaundement and the rest of the companie, I was appointed, and surely I thinke, what I haue spoken to be rather an errour then an heresie, if it be any offence at all: but though it were neither, and that all I spake should be an vndoubted trueth, yet would I recant therein, rather then loose so honourable a Seruant: And syth you haue thus like a ghostly father giuen me a spirituall counsell, you haue heard my confession, and I am ready to perfourme any penance, that you will enicpyne vpon me for my sinnes: By this, Cornelius Lute being come, the company requested that a good conoord of his instrument might perfect that conformitie which was in his Distresse: whereat Cornelius, being nothing displeased, hauing tuned his Lute, warbled out this ensuing Dittie.

CORNELIUS song.

Who aymes at honours worthy name,
And coueteith renowned fame,
In no wise can thereto aspyre,
Without the ayde of Queene desire,
Oh mighty Cupid, Venus boy,
Accept of mine vnfayned ioy.

She

of the blacke Knight.

She sits triumphant in her seat,
And foes with furious lookes doeth threat,
Which do blaspheme with wordes vnmild;
Against her selfe and bonny child,
Oh mighty Cupid, Venus boy,
Accept of mine vnfayned ioy.

A child, whose force and mighty hand,
The great God Mars could not withstand,
That burneth like a lampe of fire,
In fleeyng thoughtes wing'd with desire,
Oh mighty Cupid, &c.

Whose shining beames doeth plainly show,
The ready way for them I trow,
For to aspyre to dignitie,
If loyall Louers they will be,
Oh mighty Cupid, &c.

Lo, here behold the honours due,
To amorous hearts that will be true,
But who dislodgeth from his bowre,
Shall soone perceiue his rodde is sowre,
O mighty Cupid, &c.

And that he may with force confound,
Each liuing wyght that goeth on ground,
All you that doe this God despise,
Flye from his reach if you be wise,
O mighty Cupid, &c.

But he that mean'th not to disdaine,
For pleasures sake to take some paine,
Ioyne with the rest that amorous be,
And to his Court to gaine your fee,
Oh mighty Cupid, Venus boy,
Accept of mine vnfained ioy,

Cornelius

The strange Adventures

Cornelius hauing warbled out this Dittie, with a smiling countenance, bade them all bee merrie: and Florida, whose course was next, called for an Instrument, and in the meane time spake thus to Cornelius, My Lord, you haue pleaded so cunningly for your great Master Cupid, that sure you deserue a double fee: and no maruell, for as it is said, Animo volenti nihil est difficile, and least we should spend so much time in reasoning, that we should want day to finish our begun exercise, I beseech Chio to be mine appoe, and therewithall hauing stretched the strings of her Instrument to the highest note, she sweetely chirped out this Ode.

FLORIDAEES song,

Lately when Aurora drewe
Curtayne, which was darke of hewe,
Which vnspred shewed light,
That couered was by Lady nyght:
And blushingly discouered ay,
Her loues bed wherein she lay,
Then Titan lordly-n his seate,
Dried vp moysture with his heate,
And chased hath the vayle darke,
Of racking clowdes for his parket:
Fishes swamme in siluer streame,
And I vnrippped seame by seame,
Circumstance of natures mould,
Which rare seemed to behold,
Gazing thus with eyes of minde,
There I could nothing finde,
Which pleased not curious eye,
And therewithall I gan to spye:
Narcissus that was so fayre,
With his golden lockes of hayre,
Which of late had scorned all,
That were bent to Cupids call,
Viewing there the water cleere,
Where his beautie did appeare, He

of the blacke Knight

He thought it had another beene,
Whose like before he neuer had seene.

Thinking to embrace a shade,
(That of a substance scorne had made)

He consum'd in loues desire;

Of such force is Cupids Ire,

That prepares the bed of woes,

To all such as be his foes,

And to intrap, he snares doeth lay,

Such as doe him disobey.

When I sawe his doome so dyre,

To such as despis'd his fire :

At his flame I thought to warme,

Least I catch'd the greater harme.

Then in haste I came away,

Like aspyne leafe quaking ay,

For feare of the mighty God,

That all threatned with his rod,

That euer would disloyall be,

To his Mothers progenie,

His iudgement pronounced was,

With such terroure, that alas,

I heare it sound in mine eare,

Moouing body to pale feare,

Least I should incurre his Ire,

Which might yeeld me chiefe desire.

FLorida hauing warbled ouer this Ode very demurely, late silene,
and Moderatus, who was to follow, hauing his Lute ready for the
purpose, first boarded his Lady and Mistresse with this preamble :

Sapho was neuer more poeticall in her Muses, nor cunning in her
musical Instruments, then you, Madame, proued your selfe by this
so rare demonstration of an excellent Poet, and exquisite Musitian.
And albeit that it is a greater discommendation then praise, to bee
commended of an ill Oratour, yet pardon me, for that I do my good
will, and trueth neuer deserueth blame : and therewithall not staying
for any replie, he began with a slow and soft voyce, to measure ouer
this Cansong.

The strange Adventures

Moderatus song.

When golden Titan did the Ram forsake,
And warmed the Bull with force of greater heate,
Then forth I walked the pleasant ayre to take,
Glad when I heard the silly Lambes to bleate.
Pleas'd to behold the stormes of winters ire,
(With quiet calme) at last for to expire,

As thus I mused vnder the silent shade,
The chirping birdes chattering their harmonie,
Pleasant slumber my senses did inuade,
And then I heard a voyce that lowd did crie,
Woe worth the time that I did yeeld consent,
To lawlesse Loue, which now I do repent.

The golden shaft that pearst my panting breast,
Came from the quier hang'd at blind Cupids side,
Which hath so full bereaued me of rest,
And therewithall againe he lowdly cryde,
Woe worth the time that I did yeeld consent,
To lawlesse Loue, which now I doe repent,

Phoebus reflecting beames from polished glasse,
Yeeldes not more liuely shewes then doeth her face,
That is the cause of this my harme, alas,
Well may I say, being hopelesse in her grace,
Woe worth the time that I did yeeld consent,
To lawlesse Loue, which nowe I doe repent,

Whereat I wak't, but nothing could I viewe,
Which made me thinke a vision it should be,
And straight I rose to see what would ensue,
And then a nouell strange appeared to me,
A frozen man being in a fierie flame,
Another fryed in frost, (woe worth the same.)

Afore

of the blacke Knight:

Afore I could the meaning vnderstand,
This strange Aenigma vanished quite away,
Whereat amazed much I then did stand,
Thinking that wofull wyght did lately say,
Wo worth the time that I did yeeld consent,
To lawlesse Loue which nowe I doe repent.

P Andarina being readie to take her turne in this musical pastime, would not seeme to let Moderatus skill in Musicke and Poetrie vnensured, and therefore thus she said: Master Moderatus, you began so poetieall, persistered so musicall, and ended so sophisticall, that it is hard to iudge, whether you be a souldier of Mars, or a seruant of Venus, but if I be a good interprizer of dreames, Morpheus fauoured you highly, in giuing you so gentle a warning, shewing befoze your face a plaine demonstration of the danger, befoze you vnderooke the charge: and it is alwayes thought, that altogether, or for the most part, one dreameth of that thing, which he had most in memorie befoze he slept, whereby it plainly appeareth, that the same which you spake in the person of another, was altogether appropriated vnto your selfe: but if you say, it is not an opponents part to distinguish a question proposed, pardon me good sir, your darke description thereof made mee thus much to descant, to see if I did conceiue your meaning, befoze we should proceede any further.

Moderatus a litle mooued with Pandarinas construction of his song, was about to replie, but Florida perceiuing the alteration of his colour to grow of choller, beleuing that this dark & obscure narration of his mind touching loue, was only to blind the rest, least thei should conceiue his minde towardes her, being very glad, thinking that he was onely mooued, when his scarre was touched, plaide the moderator in disputations betweene them, saying, Concludat iniuria finis, I pray you let vs not stay all day in arguing, least it should be a meane to hinder our musicke, and therewithall tooke Moderatus by the hand, and said, Pacific your selfe gentle Syr, (for Distresse Pandarinas censure is but one Doctors opinion) and reserue what you had to speake nowe to a further disputation of all these matters, and so willing Pandarina to proceede in her charge, she sate silent, and Pandarina betooke her to
the

The strange Aduentures

the Virginals, and hauing tuned it to her minde, she began to sing thus :

When Flora flourished in her prime,
bedeckt with gallant Greene :
Had ouerspred the subtile soyle,
most liuely to be seene.

No wit could chuse but wonder much,
to see such gallant Dame,
Attired so gay with Maiestie,
belonging to the same.

She trac'd abroad with pompous pace,
and troupes of royall trayne,
Both male and female followed her,
the Prince and Country-swaine.

Each one so placed in his degree,
as best did fitte his state,
Some pleased with his happy chance,
some cursed his frowning fate.

Before her went, but dare I speake,
what there I did beholde :
A Princely youth, a mighty King,
a God both stout and bolde.

His amber lookes so gaily twyn'd
like crysped wyers of golde,
His beauty so rauished my wittes,
I can it not vnfold.

In one hand he did beare a bowe,
the other carryed fire :
Which would consume the stubburne sorte,
that seru'd not Queene desire.

And

of the blacke Knight.

And at his side a quiver did hang,
wherein was arrowes twaine:
The one with golde full finely typt,
that Louers vse to paine,

The other leaden headed was,
which makes disdayne in heart:
Who so is towch'd with this, of Loue
shall neuer feele the smart,

He winges did beare, in token that
who did his fauour require:
That he should beare aspyring minde,
and wing'd with high desire.

But last, which doeth not payne me least,
the worlde to him was darke:
He could not see to giue to each,
according to desert.

Thus marched Flora in her pompe,
chiefe Actrix of the game,
And ministred matter to the rest,
delighting in the same.

She is the frute of pleasant Ver,
most liuely to be seene:
Which glads the hearts of youthfull wyghts,
and beautifies the Greene.

She matter yeeldes to Cupids mates,
for to effect their ioy:
And he delightes within her bower,
her company to enioy.

The strange Aduentures.

This vnitie betweene these twaine,
did boyle the feruent mynde,
And made each liuing thing to cleaue
by Nature to his kynde,

The God of Loue did fancy force,
and Flora frute did yeelde,
Conuenient to effect the same,
twixt pleasant groues in fielde,

Wherefore by heapes the Amorous troupes,
resorted to the place:
And followed still this Princely crew,
their pleasures to embrace,

Whose Maiesty when I beheld;
and stately countenance,
Not Mars in field seemed so stout,
with warlike bloody launce,

For presently he vaunc'd him selfe,
vnto a stately throne,
More gorgeously then euer was wrought,
in timber or in stone,

It was emboss'd with bordering bowes,
and brancht with knots of greene,
No wyght by arte could frame the lyke,
but flourishing Flora Queene,

About this seate where Cupid sate,
the chyrping byrdes did sing,
And his Venerian Clyents eke,
a dolefull knell did ring,

Some merrily did laugh and sport,
possessing heartes desire,

And

of the blacke Knight.

And others cryed for equity,
being scorched with his fire.

This Chaos of confused sport,
did make me much to muse,
If that I should this God adore,
or so to doe refuse.

As thus I stood, not yet resolu'd
what course therein to take,
I had a summons to his Court,
my fealty to make.

Then did I seeke to wrest by force,
his will for to withstand,
All that I could, I striv'd: yet was
to weake my faynting hand.

Loe I which erst their follyes blam'd,
am now perforce constrain'd,
To yeeld obeyfance at his barre,
which late the same disdain'd.

Wherefore I burne, and so must all
that dallieth with the flame,
Euen as the Flie turning about,
is perished in the same.

Mistresse Pandarina (quoth Priscus, whose turne was next) I
being once almost a swoyne foe to Cupid and his Lawes, your
most rare and excellent discourse hath nowe altogether reclay-
med me from mine error, and wholly recanting mine heresie, with
no lesse then a sorrowfull and penitent heart, hoping a iust absolution
to follow so open and franke a confession: and therewithall having tu-
ned his instrument to his minde, he solemnely descanted upon this
ensuing Ditty.

The strange Adventures

PRISCUS song.

When Titan gan the Crancke for to ascend,
And touch'd the point ecliptike in the skie,
Each thing on earth did then him selfe defend:
Euen from his parching beames, that did welnye
Consume all things, (with violent force of heate,)
That walkt abroad in this terrestriall seate.

Princes did keepe within their princely bowres,
With bowes of greene their chambers hanged were,
Wherein they dallied with their paramours:
The windes lay silent in their concaue sphere.
All sought that night (at pleasure) take their ease,
Of raging heate the furie to appease.

The fillic swaynes (wo's me, the fillic swaynes)
Vnder a Pine in silent shade did rest,
Ah rest, which restless still my poore heart paynes,
Wherewith euen now my carkasse is opprest:
Vnawitting then their secrets I ouer-hard,
To what I did not taking good regard.

It was the great God Pans festiuall day,
When shepheards quaint do plod it with their kinde,
Of rusticke pipes they made a consort gay,
To honour Pan each sport they cald to minde:

Thus they did banquet with their musicke rude,
When to the same my selfe I did intrude,
Where when I did intrude, my heart I pa-vn'd,
For floating fame did fill mine eares with praise,
Of Venus peere, whose becke is a commaund,
And then desire that is a spurre alwayes
(So fortune would) did pricke my wounded minde,
(But in her sight) that no where ease I finde.

of the blacke Knight.

A combat straight within my selfe arose,
Of that I should yeeld vnto Queene desire,
Knowing that fame is partiall as she goes,
So I might fall in seeking to aspire,

Then Ladie Loue said that I must obcy:

Which sentence past, I durst not make delay;

Fortune thus fram'd the plot to mine annoy,
Fame blew the coales to kindle my desire,
Loue did command I should no rest enioy,
Till I were clens'd in Cupids purging fire,
Thus I doe range to seeke a remedie,
And though I liue, yet liuing daily dye.

Seing Fame of beauties pride could me enforce,
What maruell is 't if beauty it selte could moue?
But oh that beautie had not some remorse,
To yeeld me due, that feruently do loue,
Or at the least to pitie mine estate,
And not for loue to yeeld me deadly hate.

The God is blinde that workes this mysterie,
And doeth not worke according to desert,
But yet I yeeld me to his Maiestie,
In hope at last he will regard my smart.

In the meane time I banish quite despaire,
Expecting him my wracke for to repaire.

Repaire if that he will, long may he raigne,
Triumphing wise to gouerne both Gods and men;
If otherwise I can not grieve refraine,
But must seeke out a darke and dolefull den,
In deserts wilde to end my dismall dayes,
And Hermyte-like on rootes to liue alwayes.

H 4

When

The strange Aduentures

When priscus with a deepe sigh (being now come to a perfect Period) had concluded his song, Florida, hauing searched all her wittes, to deuise meanes to haue some priuate conference with Moderatus, after a competent time of silence each expecting other to speake, said, Be blythe, Gentlemen, and if, as it seemes, you haue cloyed your selues with musicke that it hath caused a surfet, hauing in such sundrie formes vsed our tongues, to refresh and recreate our selues, me thinkes it could not be amisse, to digest some of our fullsome stomackes, a litle while to vse our feet, least for want of exercise, they should ware more stiffe, and we forget our measures: but it is no maruell if we doe commit measures to obliuion, being thus long in conference about a thing that is without measure: for I doe thinke, that there is no Arithmetician so perfect, that can number it: no Geometrician so cunning, that can measure it: no Mathematician so excellent, that can proportion it: no Rhetorician so eloquent, that can describe it: no Poet so conceited, that can inuent a reason thereof: no Astronomer so singular, that can iudge of it: And to conclude, no Courtier so fine, that can exquisitely countenance it. Wherefore, Gentlemen and friends, all we haue peeled our censures thereof, and the wisest Philosopher could doe no more, without a Metaphisicall meane to vnderstand more then Nature euer taught, or the Goddes them selues had the gift to doe: thus to be brieve, in my opinion you haue done all well, hauing diuersely peeled your iudgements thereof, the thing it selfe being of nature so diuerse. And therefore I thinke it conuenient, that (seeing we haue for the most part spent this day in pleasant recreations) that we should end the same with some exercise, that would bring vs to some naturall heate after this colde confection, and to some appetites to our supper again, after our surfet in amorous discourses. And therewithall, the company with silence seeming to agree, Florida called for musicke, which being readie, she willed her brother Cornelius, and his Mistresse to lead the rest: for as they had their turne first in other exercise, so likewise to beginne with this, and she and her seruant would censure of their good skill in Carpet trade, and afterwardees peelde their cunning therein, to their iudgements. So presently they fell all a-dauncing, sauing Florida, and Moderatus, who withdrew them selues to a Bay windowe, where

Moderatus

of the blacke Knight.

Moderatus thought it not best to slippe so good an opportunitie, ~~and~~ to breake a staffe in his friends behalfe, and so after a long preamble, (the attentiuely giuing eare thereunto, supposing it had bene for him selfe) imparted vnto her, vpon a firme and sure promise of secrecie, the whole circumstance of his friends cause, his birth, Countrey, and friends, his trauaile past, and the continuance of his present care, the worthinesse of the man, and the seruencie of his loue: omitting nothing, which he thought might induce her to affect and fancie him. But hereupon Florida perceiving his drift, could scant suffer him so long a Period: for that very angerly and with bending browes, she commanded him to proceede no further in that sute: and, quoth she, if my friendly countenance hath made you so pieuish, as to abuse my curtesie so much, I will (albeit much vnwilling) plucke away from you the fauor of a friendly affection, which peradventure might haue kindled in me some fancie towards you, if you had taken in hand that office for your selfe, which so earnestly you prosecute for another. Whereupon Moderatus excusing him selfe with his owne vnworthinesse, neuerthelesse commending the desert of his friend, and vrging for him all that he could, was by Florida absolutely commanded to silence, and no more to speake for Priscus, nor to presume to enter her presence, if he seemed to disdaine of her friendly curtesie so frankly offered him. And therewithall not staying for a further replie, flung away in great choller, without any manner of salutation to the rest of the company: whereupon they all dissolued, not a little admiring the cause of Floridas so sudden departure. Moderatus, to auoide suspicion, affirmed that Florida was not well at ease, all seemed to holde them selues satisfied with this excuse, poore Priscus onely excepted, whose heart was wel-nie sundred for verie grieve, misbeeming the verie true occasion of that accident, yet dissembling his paine as much as he could, with a merrie countenance in outward semblance past ouer the matter for that time, till he might finde opportunitie to conferre with his friend therein.

Gentlemen, here may you plainly behold a very actuall Stratagem of a confused Metamorphosis, wherein Cupid sheweth the force of his power: for first, he so inflamed Priscus with the loue of Florida, (their Parents being mortall foes,) that he came from his Fathers
kingdome,

The strange Aduentures

Kingdome, a Countrey farre adiacent, to Liguria to do her seruice, this instimulation proceeding only vpon bare report of her rare beautie, blazed by a silly shepheard in a song at a rurall feast, and pastozall sporte obserued by a sorte of Countrey swaynes and shepherdes in honour of their God Pan, and therefore might rather seeme a fabulous fiction, then any demonstration of trueth, (whose credulitie therein to fallible fame, may be an holesome admonition for you to auoyde the like, being so erronious, as Cicero verifieth, saying, *Credulitas enim error est magis quam culpa.*) and the more to wzappe this young nouice in a Laberinth of his owne soude conceits, he so fauoured his frowarde affection, that causing him to forget the daunger of being continuallie in the hands of his fathers mortall enemye, he brought him from a Prince of Aemulia, to be a bassall and seruitour in her Fathers Court, whereby to obtaine the sight of her, whome he loued more deere then hee did his owne life. The young Gentleman, who had neuer bene a long wayter in Lady Venus Court, measuring the affection of Florida after his owne seruient fancie, thought euery smile a fauour, and euery looke the Kalendar of true loue: much like the Swallowes, that thinke euery Sunne-shine to be a fayre Summers day, such is the desired contrarietie of this blinde god, that he maketh the beloued little to esteeme the faithfull and vnfaigned zeale of the passionate, and tormenting louer, that daily offered his humble seruice for the pleasing of his Ladie, which taketh no effect, but rather breedeth contempt and disdainne in her skornefull and proude minde, a too too unkinde rewarde to so louing a friend. In like manner this Cyprian boy delighting in nothing but extremities, contrariwise so inflamed the minde of the young Ladie with the loue of Moderatus, that not onely her affection to him was match-able to Priscus fancie towards her, but also did exceede her patient in loue towards him, who being not yet moued with the violent passions of seruient desire, did little regarde the same, though contrarie to Decorum in feminine sexe, she by her owne mouth had giuen him to vnderstand thereof. So much he delighteth in chaungeable nouelties, that he holdeth not that plea for currant in his Court, which is not like Proteus, that receiueth euery shape, or to the Polip that is apt for euery impression,

of the blacke Knight:

pression, as to the Cameleon, that turneth it selfe into the likenesse of every object: howe dangerous is it then to warme at his fire, the heate whereof not onely wythereth the bodie, but also wearyeth the minde, which, like the venime of a Tarantula, deuoureth a man laughing: a pleasing euill, which vnawares bringeth vs to confusion. Well, had Priscus but remembered that a womans eye draweth like the Adamant, and preiudeth like the Basiliske, hee woulde not haue come so farre to seeke his owne bane: but truely it is, Love is sencelesse and lawlesse, and therefore he that is subiect thereto obeyeth no reason: for needes must hee trotte, whome the Deuill driueth, as the olde Addage is, otherwise Priscus had neuer so blynded him selfe with selfe-will, who nowe hath full experience (hauing with repentance bought the same) in the miserable life of vnfortunate Louers, whose onely staye is but a rotten staffe: for nowe feeling the bitter pangues of his tormenting passions to surcharge him with sorowe and grieve, hee trembled to thinke of the answere hee should receiue of his assured friend Moderatus, and therefore as one in despayre of his owne lyfe, he sayned an excuse of some vrgent and waighy businessse to bee done with all expedition, which called him (as he sayde) verie much against his will to the dispatch thereof. The rest of the company hauing concluded to suppe together, whereby, with a cuppe of pure wine, to drinke downe all their paskimes and sportes, (seeing as he sayned such necessarie businessse and affayres drew him from their companie) they woulde stay his friend Moderatus as a pledge of his returne, in hope afoze the feast were ended, hee woulde repayre to ransom him. Whereupon Priscus departed, and they all together seeing che companie bare without Florida, determined first to visite her, and then if her distemperature were not ouer-much, they would intreate her to be their guest, and beate them companie that night: which accordingly they perfourned, and came all together to her chamber, where she being very melancholy, and hauing a flea in her eare, had cast her selfe vpon her bed, and by this had breathed forth, not onely a number of grienous grones and scalding sighes, but also many hard and sharpe inuectiues against Moderatus, that so discourteously had refused her gentle offer: and therefore her former choller something

qualified,

The strange Aduentures

qualified, Florida, at their comming to the chamber, awaked out of her dumptes, (being verie high minded, and therefore would not be perceiued to mourne for any thing, slept vp vpon a sudden, and saide vnto them: now gentle friendes, you haue played the good woodsmen, that hauing wounded the Deare, you followed his tracke so wel, that you came to his denne, where he was ready to breath his last: for surely, in good earnest be it spoken, I was so wearied with this dayes exercise, that my pillowe was my best Physitian: and therewithall spying Moderatus present, and Priscus away, she thought it was well, and that Moderatus had recanted in his errour, & Priscus become non-sute in his action. And therefore vpon their entreatie, to haue her companie to suppe, she willingly assented to goe with them: and being all come to the place appointed, supper was readie, and they fell roundly to their vittails: for their exercise that day had brought them to good appetites. And repast being done, after a little prattle, being all desirous of rest, they took leaue each of other, & so departed.

Moderatus great sorow, that his faithfull endeour could not take place with FLORIDA for the preferment of his friend. His determination to leaue DEVASCOS Court, and his letter to FLORIDA to signifie the same.

Chap. 6.

Moderatus, who (all this while was very sore disquieted in minde, his thoughtes wandering at it were betwene Scilla and Charibdis) could by no meanes deuise how to rid him selfe out of the intricate Labyrinth he was in: first, the loyall league of friendship betwene him and Priscus, moouing him to great pitie, in that his faithfull endeavour could not take effect to satisfie the desire of his dearest friend: and again, being very pensive, for that reason and honestie commaunded him to refuse the courteous and gentle offer of the faire Florida: but to be brieve, loue and vertue being at great warres in his minde, Loue hammering in his head a thousand reasons to mooue him to fancie Florida, and assuring him of a sufficient meane to retaine his friendship still with Priscus: Vertue on the other side, forbidding him to violate his faith vnto his friend,

leaff

of the blacke Knight.

least in so doing he should become hatefull vnto the worlde, and his name growe odious amongst men: in the end vertue hauing gotten the superiortie, (for by nature he was much inclined thereto) he be- thought with him selfe howe he might best further his friend in his Amours, knowing very well that to dissuade him from his purpose, was with the Asirian wolues to barke against the starres, and when he had tossed diuers and sundrie deuises in his head concerning the same, none seeming currant, but all impossible, if he remained where Florida might haue knowledge of him: for nowe he iudged that his presence was the greatest let to hinder Priscus determinate purpose, and therefore he determined to remooue that blocke, and so resolved vnawares to any, presently to auoyd the Dukes Court, thinking that when Florida missed him, she would be glad to entertaine Priscus: for that women, hauing ouce feathered their thoughtes with fancie, would doe no lesse then still ayme at affection: and he knew very wel, there was no fayrer marke for her in all her fathers Court, then Priscus, and thus he concluded with him selfe the next morning to depart from Albigena. On this determination he went home to his fathers lodging, thinking it not the wisest course to goe to his friends Priscus chamber in the Court, least if he were prest to reueale vnto him the veritie of the matter, it might breed in him such a despaire, that his pretended pollicie would serue for small purpose: who being come to his fathers gate, it was so farre past of the night, that al were in bed: neuerthelesse he repayzed to the chamber window of a ser- uant of his Fathers, whome he loued verie faithfullly, and called him to open the gate for him, who incontinently so did, and shewed him a chamber to take his rest, whereupon he spake to Baletto, (for so his Fathers man was called, being assured of his fidelitie, which very often had yeelded vnto him many sure pledges of truethe) howe that he was to depart from the Dukes Court vpon some serious businesse, which required a present dispatch, to the executing whereof, he must be furnished with a pilgrimes weede, & therefore gaue him in charge, by morning to prouide such furniture as belonged thereunto: and therewithall deliuered him Crownes sufficient to buy the same, pro- mising also to reward him well for his labour, and so Baletto hyed him about his businesse, and Moderatus betooke him to his ease, who all
this

The Strange Adventures

this night tooke but small rest, beating his braines sometimes about the course of his trauell, other-whiles calling to memozie howe grievously his parents would take his absence, with diuers other occurrences which happened to come to his minde: and lastly resolved vpon this point, that if he truly discharged the part of a friend, he did not care how his trauell prospered, howe his parents should be grieued, nor howe he should be thought of by his friend. And so peremptorily determining to depart suddenly, he tooke pen, ynke, and paper, and deuised these ensuing lines to be sent to Florida.

TO FAIRE FLORIDA, PERFECT health and prosperous happinesse.

THat which verie often I haue read in antiquities, I finde now plainly verified in you: which is, that Loue swimmeth in a womans eye, but neuer diueth into her heart: fancie is the load-starre that ruleth her affection, and desert is either neuer respected, or slenderly considered, it is presently in obliuion. Well, nowe I perceiue that the finest veluet hath his bracke, the fayrest Rose his prickle, and the rarest beauty a disdainfull and coye resolution, which doeth more blemish an honourable minde, then the most excellent hew of beauty doeth garnish and adorne the body: for as it is sayd, If thou be fayre, thou oughtest diligently to endeouour thy selfe, that thy vertuous lyfe bee æquiualent to those good partes which thy Creatour bestowed vpon thee: but if fowle, thou oughtest so much the more to endeouour thy selfe to excell in vertue, as thou art others inferiour in beautie. Wherefore, Madame, vnnaturall were it for you, beyng furnished with such heauenly and diuine beauty, to haue your heart so hardened in the forge of crueltie, as not to releue the ceaselesse torments of your faythfull Louer, and my distressed friend, who counting all daunger a ioye, all grieve a grace, all payne a pastyme, and wayghing all torments as a treasure, so the same were sustayned in your seruice, or vnder-taken at your commaundement: and to be brieft, had you any way regarded a loyall and louing heart, founded vpon an vn-
fayned

of the blacke Knight.

fayned and vertuous resolution, so long coulde you not haue with-helde your eye of pittie from him, that so often, yea, euen within your viewe languished with such pure tormenting payne and griefe, that his onely hope of release was, to haue his small dayes ended by the pearcing and deadly darte of death. Happily you will say, that I pronounce a sharpe sentence against mine owne selfe, and iudge me as arrogant in denying your most curteous offer, as you were vnkynd in not graunting my request. True it is, if eyther the force of lawlesse loue, or the ouer-liberal curtesie (farre aboue my desart) of a royall and beautifull Lady, had bene (of a vertuous and honest mynde) more to be respected and regarded, then the sacred league and inuiolable bond of true and faythfull friendshippe, which vnited Priscus minde and mine together, much more had I ouer-shot my selfe to deny your request, and to refuse the thing I most of all desired: but seeing the Imperiall lawes of sacred societie did will and commaund the contrary, I thinke therein that I haue done but my duety: wherefore knowe fayre Florida, that sith your doome was so dyre, as absolutely to forbid me your presence, without I vndertooke so much for my selfe, as I did then prosecute for my friend, rather then I would falsifie my fayth, I meane (though to my no small griefe) to fu'fill the tenor of your sentence, by abisenting my selfe not only from your presence, but also from your fathers Court, & faithfully bequeath my selfe to a pilgrimes life, to assay if by my penance I may releate my friend from his martyrdom. Wherefore receiue this my last adewe, and credite me, the refusing of your gentle offer proceeded of a firme zeale towards my friend, & not of a coy disdaine towards you: assuring you, but to preiudice Priscus, I am euery way at your commaund: & so intending not to returne againe, till either Florida hateth Moderatus, or loueth Priscus. I beseech you, if euer you affected me, you attribute the same vnto him as his due, who as Cicero said, est quasi alter idem, and therefore may iustly challenge all that were due vnto me. I am so quaint in my pilgrims habite, that I forget the reuerence due to so royal a lady. Wherefore I pray for pardon, & wish you (if the prayer of a pilgrime may take effect) to commend me to Priscus.

The strange Aduentures

And thus, with tears in mine eyes, & grief in my heart, I comend you to your pleasure, and bequeath my selfe to my trauell.

Pours, euery way, but to pre-
iudice Priscus,

DON MODERATVS

Moderatus departure from Albigena. Priscus intercepting of MODERATVS letters to FLORIDA & perusal of the same. His griefe for the losse of his friend, which driue him to a dangerous feuer: MODERATVS letter sealed againe, and deliuered to FLORIDA. Her meditation vpon the same: the altering of her resolution, and affecting of PRISCVS. The Ladies and Gentlemens visiting of PRISCVS being sicke. CORNELIVS censure vpon Beautie and Bountie.

Chap. 7.

MOderatus hauing finished this letter, repaired to the chamber of Baletto, to see howe things were in a readinesse, (thinking it long till he were departed from Albigena) and to deale with him for the conueying of the letter to Florida, where by chaunce he found Priscus page, who had bene forth so late the night before, that for feare to disquiet his Master, he had taken vp his lodging there, (as often he vsed to doe) whereupon Moderatus did consider with him selfe, that he would be a verie fitt messenger for that purpose, and therefore he tooke him the letter closely sealed, and wished him with conuenient speede to deliuer the same vnto his sister Verosa, wishing her in his name to deliuer it ouer to Florida, according to the direction thereof: Further desiring the page not to make it knowne to any that he had seene him, and the rather to haue him to accomplish his request, he clapt him in the fist with a brace of angels, and tolde him that he was to goe vpon some serious businesse, which he would not haue any to vnderstand thereof. And thus hauing schooled the Page what he had to doe, he bade him heartily farewell, and returned to his owne chamber againe, where hee found Baletto readie with all thinges that he lacked for his iourney, wherewith he presently furnished himselfe, and hauing left order with him to excuse his absence to his Parents, and for the doing of his businesse

of the blacke Knight.

linesse which he left vnperfect, he rewarded him well for his labour, and so departed with Auroraes first blush, that he might not be descryed of any, passing through gardens and vineyardes (a way verie secret) till he came to the forest, where we will leaue him as yet not fully determined, which way from thence to bende the course of his trauell. And now we returne to Priscus, who all the night before had taken very little rest: for that no disquietnesse may be compared to the griefe of minde, wherewith he was continually vexed, and now much more then euer before, supposing that Floridas sudden departure was a Kalender of his ensuing calamities: for hauing his barge tossed amidst the weltring waues of Fortunes euer-changing surges, Floridas looks onely guided the sterne, so that for euery wrinkle in her browe, and frowne in her face, he was in daunger of present shipwacke. The absence of his friend Moderatus also greatly troubled him, both for that he longed to vnderstand his successe with Florida, and also much maruelled, why he came not to bed vnto him the night before, as his manner was: and as thus he studied vpon these and such other contingents, his Page came in: whereupon he addrested him selfe to be stirring, and the Page busie helping to make ready his Master, the letter sent by him to be deliuered to Florida, fel from his bosome, the which Priscus presently espying, demaunded what it was: the Page lothe (by reason of the charge giuen him by Moderatus) to confesse the trueth, fayned some excuse, (what vpon a sudden came to his head) but neuerthelesse Priscus, by the indozlement thereof, perceiued it to be his friend Moderatus hand-writing, and that the direction was to Florida, which sight made him very blancke, but better remembryng him selfe, he straightly examined his Page howe he came by the same letter, and what he had in charge to doe therewith, who seeing his Master in some choller, thought it now no time to dallye with him, and thereupon presently confessed the trueth. Priscus now maruelling what was become of his friend, being great with childe till he might vewe the contentes of his letter, in the ende after long studie, he bethought him of the print of Moderatus signet, which he had in yuozie, and therefore might well open the same without knowledge, whereupon presently vnripping the seale, he perused his friendes lines to Florida, wherein perceiuing the fidelitie of Mode-
R
ratus,

The strange Aduentures

ratus, and the great crueltie of Florida, he grew very melancholy and passionate for his friend, in so much that he beganne to quake like the Alpine leafe, falling therewith vpon a sudden to a very dangerous feuer, which forced him not onely to keepe his chamber, but also to embrace his pillowe: but neuerthelesse sealed the letter a-new, and commaunded his Page to doe therewith as his friend Moderatus had giuen him in charge, which the Page accordingly performed, but the letter being come to Floridas hand, and vnderstanding the same to come from Moderatus, she was the gladdest woman in the worlde, thinking it had bene a recantation of his former follie, and therefore presently opened the same, and read ouer his lynes, biewing and reuiewing euery worde in particular: the agonie of this sudden sight tormenting her so much, that she was skant able to keep her countenance, whylest shee fained some businesse to send away Verosa, which deliuered the same letter vnto her, who being gone, she secretly conueyed her selfe to her closet, and began thus to meditate vpon the matter.

Oh Florida, what meaneth this alteration? and whercof proceedeth these vnwonted passions? hast thou bene courtes of so many braue and gallant Gentlemen? sued vnto and sought by so manie worthe Personages, and seruice offered vnto thee by so many noble Lordes: all which thou heldest in disdaine, scorning Cupides Alarums, and condemning for superstition Aphrodites Orisons: and nowe like the Beetle (hauing nestered in the Sunne all day, is contented with a Cowsharde for shelter at night,) art, not onely forced to be the foremost souldiour to march, when Cupid soundeth his trumpet, and both to decke Venus shine at Paphos with flowers, and to offer incense at her Altar for sacrifice: but also overcome with base and seruite thoughtes, art (contrarie to the qualitie of thy sexe) driuen to offer the fauour of thy affection to thy bassall, yea, an vpart, not known whence he came, onely by thy Fathers bountie preserved from famishing, and from a beggar aduanced to dignitie, and he thus unkindely to rewarde thy curtesie with so slender a regard of thy friendly offers. O vniust Fortune, that workest these strange stratagemes, and procurest thus my preiudice: but truely it is, thou hast as many frownes as smiles, who fawning like the Tigre when

of the blacke Knight:

when hee meaneth most harme: and shewing forth a sorrowe and
frowning countenance, doeth prognosticate fayre weather at hande:
for after a great storme, followeth a pleasant calme. But what
Florida, is it possible that Moderatus is gone: or writeth thus un-
to thee to trye thy patience: no, Moderatus is too wise to iell in
these matters, gone hee is too sure. O unkinde churle, that thus
repayest my loue with hate, and requitest my ardent desire with
peremptorie and colde distaine, resembling the Cedar, which is most
fayre in sight, but yet bringeth no fruite: or the Nightingale, that
hath a most sweete voyce, but ranke flesh: so thou, seeming as simple
as a Dove in outward semblance, yet in minde as cruell as a fu-
rie, or a rauening Lyon. What now, Florida: wade not too farre
in these inuectiues, before thou considerest the cause aright: for a
rash iudgement doeth but seldome saue of Iustice: Moderatus
sued vnto thee for his friend, and thou wouldest haue him conuert
the same for him selfe: glad hee woulde haue bene so to doe, but
that his amitie with Priscus did forbid him to falsifie his faith vnto
his friend: so that hee had rather. (though to his great grieve) re-
fuse thy offer, and forsake his most louing and carefull Parents, and
all his deere friends, then he would be founde disloyall and treache-
rous in his friendshippe: oh rare and wonderfull great faith, and
worthie to bee had in great estimation amongst all men, whome the
force of loue could not moue, the displeasure of a Princesse coulde
not feare, the losse of kinde and naturall Parents coulde not cracke,
nor the hardnesse and daunger of a Pilgrimes life, (which euery mo-
ment is subiect to the storme of waywarde destinie) could bend: then
Florida, seeing that Moderatus preferred his friends welfare be-
fore his owne, and that he chose rather to preiudice his owne person,
then any way to hinder Priscus: and desired in his last farewell, that
thou wouldest suppose him to be present in the habite of his friend: for
that they had but one minde to their two distinct bodies. Thinke then
of the worthines of Priscus, who loueth thee as his owne life, and hath
sustained such hard penance for thy sake, that more thou couldest not
with thine enemy, & lesse had bene too much for one that loued so faith-
fully: & now entertaine him with some comfort at his intreaty, whom
thou so tenderly didst loue: but what, Florida, wilt thou so soone peeld

The strange Aduentures

to sonde affection, as to loue thy Fathers mortall foe: hast thou none to fancie, but the sonne of Lothus King of Aemulia, that so often hath vexed thy father and his subiectes: and haply vnder colour of professing loue vnto thee, pretendeth some treason vnto thy father, seeking rather to drawe some of his subiectes from their allegiance, then to match with his daughter in marriage. Ah, but where rouest thou fond Florida, thou doest measure his inwarde intencion by thy suspicious cogitation, and is it not a Maxim in the Ciuill lawe, that suspicion is no prooffe, where it is said, Factum consistit in externo & corporali actu, animus in tacito & incorporali intellectu, vnde in animi effectus non potest cadere facti euidentia: & thou deemest Priscus to circumuent treason, who not onely assureth trueth in his wordes, but also manifesteth the same in action: for if he had thought to surpriſe thy father with treacherie, he would not haue suffered him selfe to bee discouered vnto thee. And what though his father and mine were and are still foes, might we not neuerthelesse be friendes: yea, and our friendship be an occasion of amitie betweene our Parents: seeing their hate is not deadly, but growen of unkindnesse, and some ostentation and desire of superiozitie. And by this match both Provinces might be vnited together, that it might not onely preserve the liues of a number of their subiectes, but also arme them selues with such strength, that no stormie blast of sinister Fortune might shake the foundation of any of them both. Loue then Florida, for the worthines of the man willethe thee so to doe: his birth and Parentage are sufficient pledges of honourable patrimonie, and his personage and behaviour are liuelie portraictures and perfect Happes of true Nobilitie: his merite is farre aboue thy desert, and his faithfull heart (tryed with the touchstone of trueth) excellethall: so that I thinke nothing wanting in him, that might be wished for in an honourable Gentleman, or a loyall loue. Weere fetching a deepe sigh, Florida made a verie long Period: Cupid nowe hauing founde her as a wanton playing the trewand, had whipped her with nettles to requite all her former coyneſſe, and therefore she began to forget her deereſt Moderatus, and to imprint in her thoughtes the liuely Idea of Priscus perfect shape, verifving the olde Adage,

Qui procul ab oculis, procul est a lumine cordis.

Thus

Thus making a vertue of necessitie, hauing none other at this time worthe entertaining, she resolved to frame her countenance so mildly towards Priscus, that (if heretofore shee had giuen him a cooling carde for his hote desire, which might driue him to despaire) now hope might giue him comfort, that opportunitie would be a good plea to further his action: deuising with her selfe by what meanes she might best giue Priscus to vnderstand of her newe conceiued affection, who being in this solemne meditation, came in some of her gentlewomen, with whome she passed the time away, remaining in a kinde of longing desire, till good fortune should bring them once together: Priscus all this while kept his bed, his ague being so extreeme, that the report thereof was publikely known, and the absence of Moderatus vnderstoode, which caused great heauinesse throughout al the Dukes Court in general: for that he was verie curteous and bountifull vnto all, and therefore greatly beloued of all: his Parents and friends greatly grieved therewith, especially because they knewe not the cause of his departure, nor where to send in quest of him. The Duke and the Duchesse tooke it also very heauily, for that they entirely loued Moderatus for his Gentlemanly qualities, vertuous conditions, sober life, and diligent seruice. Thus a good space was his departure greatly bewayled throughout the whole Citie of Albigena, all comforting Priscus, supposing the losse of his friend to be the cause of his disease, the which Moderatus Parents noted in him presently: for being verie often with him, sometimes hee would raue, and be as it were franticke, and then he neuer ceased to call vpon his friend Moderatus, the which being vnderstood, they tooke verie great care of him, and gaue in charge to Verosa tenderly to looke vnto him, and to cherish him in his sicknesse, which the Physicians helde dangerous, though not mortall. Verosa for her brothers sake, that was his friend, (his owne curteous and gentle behauiour deseruing no lesse) willingly assented so to doe, in perfourmance of her Parents commaunde, and of good will vnto him: and amongst other times, Florida and Pandarina once did beare her companie: for that both of them indeed could haue bene contented to haue comforted him in the best sort they could, although in outward shewe they dissembled: who being come to the Patients chamber, they found him very sicke, yet

The strange Aduentures

At the latter ende of his fitte, which made them offer them selues a while to keepe him chat, to beguile the tediousnesse of the time. Priscus saynt as he was, very heartily gaue them thanks, who espying Florida, (being very neere his bed, and taking him by the wrist to feele his pulse, and asking him whether the day of his Crisis was past) was almost in a sounde to beholde her, that had thus wrought all his prejudice: the which Florida perceiuing, gaue him verie comfortable wordes, and cherished him verie tenderly, and bade him take heart, for that a valiant minde is neuer knowen but in extremitie, as the pure golde in the furnace. Priscus well noted her wordes, which somewhat did lighten his heart, albeit hee much marvelled, from whence this sudden kindnesse had proceeded, after so cruell a sentence pronounced against him, holding it for authenticall, that naturally fire and water coulde not agree in one substance, nor yet loue and hate so to concurre in one person, that so suddenly the one should expulse the other: experience hauing taught him, that the lowest shrubbe groweth not to his full height in a moment, that flaxe will not burne at the sight of the fire, and that Floridas deadly hatred could not so soone be conuerted to loue and affection: yet he called to minde howe the tallest blade of Spattania groweth to his full height in an instant, that the hard stone Calcire, which can be bruised with no mettall, is resolved into liquoz with the heate of the Sunne, and that a womans heart is like ware, which is apt for euery impression, and therefore (forgetting that Ouid said, *Spes dea sed fallax*) hee nowe builded a-fresh vpon hope, and iudged all to the best. Wherevpon Florida perceiuing his colour something to mend, his pulses moderately to mooue, and he somewhat to rouse him selfe in bed, told him how his Distresse Pandarina came to visite him, who presently tooke Floridas tale by the end, excusing her selfe, in that she had not oftener comforted him in his sickness, alleadging till then, that she was ignorant thereof: interchanged curtellie to and fro past between them. Priscus nowe prettily well recovered, and very iocund, as it were, with the gentlewomen, Cornelius the Dukes sonne, with other Courtiers his companions and friends, came to visite Priscus, who said that he was glad to see him so well: then quoth Priscus, I pray you thanke the Gentlewomen, whose presence hath made me to forget

get

get my passionate ague : well, quoth Cornelius, sith (Gentlewo-
men) you haue begun to be pleasing to Priscus, I would you would
so continue, and we would giue you our assistance therein, and I doe
thinke some discourse to beguile the time would doe well, to recre-
ate his minde a little, which is greatly wearped with the violent pas-
sions of his long sicknesse. Then quoth Pandarina, seeing you do
appoint the pastime, you will giue vs leaue to make choyce of the
matter : if you be opponent, (quoth Cornelius) on Gods name pur-
pose your question, and you shall see, though we be old trewandes,
that we haue not forgotten all our sophistrie. No, quoth Florida, we
must not hold the diseased patient with such long ambages, which wil
cleane tye him, and so augment his griefe, but rather with some
short discourse to make him sharpe and hungry, and not to cloy him
with too much, to procure surfet. Hereunto they all agreed, and that
Florida should appoint the text, and then all they to draw cutts, who
should discourse thereupon. Then (quoth Florida) let the proposition
be : Whether outward Beautie, or inward Bountie deserueth most
praise, or is of greatest force to procure loue. The theame being
giuen, it fell to Cornelius lot to be the Orator, who was of a verie
sharpe and quicke wit, and withall, verie desirous to shew his cunning
befoze Verosa, whom he had so viewed with the eye of fancie, that
the respect of his honour could not hinder him from entring a plea in
Venus court : & framing him selfe to the performance of his charge,
lending an amorous glaunce to Verosa, which she presently noting,
died her cheeks with such vermilion taint, that Aurora blushing at
the sight of vnacquainted Phaeton, seemed not so glorious of hue : and
so proceeded to his matter thus. Well, gentle friendes, you may see
how vnjust the fates be in their fauours, & the destinies in their dooms,
alwaies laying the greatest burthen on him that is least able, working
all things by extremities, keeping a mean in nothing but being out of
measure, alwaies spurring that horse which had most need of a bridle :
not contented with any thing but impossibilities, taking delite to haue
vs seeke to reach aboue Ela, when skant we can attaine vnto Sol fa :
for if they had not bene iniurious in their constellations, they had not
amongst so many (far better skilled then my selfe) haue allotted me
(which for the most part am ignorant in Ouids principles) to make a
distinction.

The strange Aduentures

distinction in loue betweene Beautie and Bountie, a matter too high for my meane capacitie: but neuerthelesse, seeing Fortune hath decreed it to bee so, and that you doe expect the same, I will neither contrarie her in her absolute commaundes, nor deceiue you in your wished expectation, conditionally you take in good part, what vpon the sudden my simple skill may affoord: thus not doubting but the gentlewomen will either quite fall a-sleepe, or else play with their little dogges, when first they shall heare my rude methode, I will to the matter, least I should shape Hercules shooe for a childes foote, and so be iustly rather condemned for my follie, then indifferently thought of for my curiositie.

First therefore, because the principall matter in this case to bee considered, is loue: we must knowe both the nature and seate thereof, before we can proportion our compasse to leuell at our desire: the which, as some Philosophers hane decyphered, is but a secret inspiration of the soule, inducing a man to affect and fancie such things, as nature hath metaphysically ingrafted in the minde to delight thereof: for otherwise we should not see some one to fancie the beautie of the bodie, another the vertue of the minde, another to fancie for riches sake, though neuer beautifull nor wise: thus as loue proceedeth by these, and by manifolde and sundrie other wayes and meanes, so I thinke euery one to affect most of all those qualities in another, wherewith they are them selues furnished: for as the Rauen and the Ape thinke their yong ones fayrest, so euery one naturally valueth his owne giftes and qualities most singular and of greatest estimation, so much they are blinded with the loue thereof. Semblably in my opinion, true and perfect loue can not bee but betweene equales, at least wise in disposition and consent of minde, according as the Proverbe is, *Similis gaudet simili*, so that the nature of the person entertaineth the consent to fancie, and the ratifying of affection. Moreover, loue might bee well compared to the shadowe vpon a Horologe, or to the grasse vpon the earth: for the one, you may perceiue it to haue mooued, and the other to haue growen, but you can not see and discern the one moouing, nor the other growing: so of loue, well may you feele the smart beeing once snared therewith, and so secretly doth he take possession in the minde, that better you may perceiue him to haue

of the blacke Knight.

haue entred, then take him with the manner: for first it swimmeth in the eye, and then secretly stealeth into the heart, being of nature so subtil, that perfectly to decypher the nature thereof, is a thing metaphisicall and aboue nature. The reasons therefore that should induce vs to loue, should be things like it selfe, that is, rare, singular, and perfect, and as it is a thing heauenly and diuine: so in humane creatures, we should fancie and affect those giftes which are seated in the minde, which is immortall and heauenly, & not in the body, which is brittle and transitorie: Beautie is a gift much to be commended, but Bountie is a vertue moze to be respected: Beautie pleaseth the eye for a moment, which like the dayes in Aprill begin with a Sunne-shine, and end with a showre: but Bountie is an ornament of the minde, which, like the Camomell, the moze it is trodden the thicker and better it groweth: or to the pomander, that yeeldeth the sweetest sent, when it is most of all chafed. Yet neuerthelesse, was it not the Beautie of Helen that mooued Paris so to fancie her, that he could not liue without her: was it not likewise the comelinessse of Aeneas personage, that caused Dido to loue him so much, that she killed her selfe by reason of his absence: and was it not also the Beautie of Cresed, which made Troilus so to languish for her, that he was at the point of death: Infinite moze examples I could produce, where Beautie alone without the helpe of Bountie, haue inueagled the beholders thereof vnadvisedly to intertaine fancie: for as there is nothing moze pleasing and precious to the eye, so there is nothing moze brittle and fading, being but a pleasant bayte to intrappe the minde, which well might be compared to a hauens blaze, the which as it is violent, can not be permanent: or to the apples in Arabia, which begin to rot before they be halfe ripe. Therefore, by howe much the minde deeth excell, and is of greater estimate then the bodie, by so much is the vertue of the one to be preferred before the beautie of the other, which made Diogenes to say to a beautifull youth, much beloved for his faire complexion, O fond yong man, why dost thou not studie to conuert the louers of thy bodie, to be louers of thy minde. Aristotle being demaunded, howe happened it that we held communication longer, and moze willing with a beautifull bodie then another, answered, that blinde persons vsed so to doe: for that they perceiue

L

ceiue

The strange Aduentures

refue not the bzittlenesse of the beauty, but the forme and grace of the colour. Aristotle in another place calleth beautie, the spurre of fame. Diogenes said it to be a great gift of nature : Socrates, the violence of a short time: Plato, the prerogative of nature, which happeneth but to a few: Theophrastus tearmeth it a silent fraud, which perswadeeth without wordes : Theocritus, a glittering miserie, which is pleasant to the sight, but the cause of many inconueniences : Carneades, a kingdome without gouernour, for that the beautifull commaunde what they will, without compulsion or force . Thus you may see the opinion of diuerse philosophers touching beautie, which neuerthelesse I will assure you, is of great force to procure loue, and that made Cineas the philosopher to say, that the gods them selues in framing thereof, went beyond their skill : for that the maker was subiect to the thing made : and true it is, for what made Iupiter to transforme him-selfe into the likenesse of a Swanne to beguile Leda, and into a Bull to rauish Europa : what transformed Neptune vnto a horse, and Mercurie vnto a Goate, but beautie ? what moued Apollo to be in loue with Daphne ? what caused Bacchus to fauour Gnosida, but beautie ? well then, if beautie was of such force to stirre the mindes of the Goddes to affection, what maruell is it, if mortall wightes and humane creatures had not the power, for to withstande the sharpe assaults of his piercing beames : for who so lookes vpon the Sunne, if he be not Eagle eyed, becommeth stone blinde, and he that gazeth on beautie, vlesse his heart be as hard as Adamant, will presently be inueagled therewith. So that as I thinke, beautie induceth the minde to affection, and bountie bindeth vp the match with the consent of the heart : Beautie winneth, and Bountie conserueth, but either of them by it selfe, though for a small time it might procure liking, yet in the ende it would growe to loathing : wherefore, that loue that should be founded vpon beautie alone without vertue, would with that glorious hewe and fading gloze vanish away : for what loue should remaine, when the thing beloued were lost : againe, the loue grounded vpon bountie without beautie, although for a season it might be conserued with the habite of vertue, yet in the ende would it growe lothesome, much like a scatt storied with plentie of fine eates and daintie dishes, and all these serued in vncleane vessels, the
place

Of the blacke Knight:

place of repast being also a dungeon full of stentch and filthinesse: finally, Beauty might well be compared to the wieke of a candle, and Bountie to the tallowe: for the wieke by it selfe being lighted, is but a flash, and will presently out a gaine: and the tallowe put in the fire, will make a flame, yet quench immediatly: but the tallowe and the wieke wrought together, will euer holde light while the substance doeth last. Thus you may see that Beauty by it selfe is fading, Bountie by it selfe is vnpleasant, and so neither without other durable: wherefore I thinke both very requisite to obtaine and preferue loue. Thus to be brieue, my conclusion is that Beautie is a rare gift, but Bountie a singular vertue: Beautie for a small time garnisheth the bodie, but Bountie perpetually adozneth the minde. Wherefore as Acops an hearbe not sayre to the sight, nor pleasant to the smell, yet of a singular and secret vertue, is much preferred before the glorious, yet infectious Aconitum: so Bountie, though in neuer so hard a complection, being of such a precious operation, is to be preferred before the royall apparicion of Beautie, which is but fading and momentarie: but this I allowe, that Bountie and vertue, by howe much as it is in the more beautifull complection, by so much it is the more commendable. And therefore to conclude. I say, that Beauty encreasech fancie, and Bountie nourisheth affection, but both ioyned together be both rare and singular, which may procure the most waivering Cresed and dissembling Aeneas to be faithfull and constant.

Cornelius and Verosas secrete fancies: Floridas promise of fauour to PRISCVS. VEROSAS meditation vpon the sequel of her amours. CORNELIUS conference with her, and her ratifying of affection. Chap. 8.

BEre Cornelius finished his discourse, and all allowed of his censure, chiefly Verosa, who hauing curiously surueyed in her mind the exquisite perfection of young Cornelius, she seemed nowe to like of loue, as the Hyperborei do of licorice, wherewith at night they allay their thirst, hauing in the morning spurned it with their feet: yet for that hitherto her best had not yelded

The strange Aduentures

to the stroke of the hammer, wherewith Cupid did vse to forge fancie vpon the anduill of desire, she manfully resisted the fresh alarums of incroching affection, her meane birth and hard fortune disabling her, nay rather putting her out of all hope that Cornelius meant to seeke her in the way of matrinomie: thus struiuing with her new passions, and dissembling her new conceiued loue in outward apparance, she made no semblance of alteration.

The sicke Gentleman readie to faint for wearinesse, Florida standing close by his bed side, (all the rest of the companie being in conference something further off) she gaue him very comfortable wordes, assuring him when he would be able to walke abroad, she would reward him with the due hyze of all his deserued trauailes: praiuing him to satisfie him selfe with those fewe wordes, till opportunitie would offer them more conuenient time for the same: for, quoth she, I haue suspicious heads in my companie, and therefore can not doe as I would, but in the meane time, take this for a pledge of my affection, and so giuing him a sweete kisse vpon his colde lips, with interchaunged glaunces, they bade each other adewe, and the rest of the companie in like sorte taking their leaue of the sickely Patient, departed. Cornelius, as they were all stirring to goe forth, had opportunitie to deliuer to Verosas handes a skrowle, wherein he had painted out the seruencie of his fancie vnto her, which he carryed about him for that purpose: whereupon Verosa began to feelee her heart warmed, with a secret and priuie flame that lay wrapp'd in her bosome, which secret mysterie contained in the amorous poeme deliuered her by Cornelius, the contents whereof she greatly longed to suruay: and therefore secretly slipt away from all the companie, and conueyed her selfe to her chamber, where locking her selfe fast within, least she should be interrupted of any, she began to peruse his lines, which were as hereafter followeth, or to like effect.

THe fluent streame that leades a swelling tyde,
When Aquilon the raging waues doeth reare,
Bounce not more oft vpon their bankes so wyde,
That with their force the stony rockes doe tear.
Then panting doeth my heart her prison walles,
Iampe oft against, andumping sudden falles,

The

of the blacke Knight.

The little current stealing through the vale,
Being stopt in course about her banke doeth swell:
So stealing loue suppress, doeth make me pale,
For why, in thought I feele a present hell.
Thou maist direct the streame her course to keepe,
And free my heart that lyeth in prison deepe,

The little shrubbes in downes stirre not at all,
And meane mens thoughts are seldom sauc'd with care,
When mightie Cedars shakt with windes do fall,
And noble mindes on chaunces hard do fare.
Loue lookes not lowe on Idiots rustie ragges,
Nor cares not much for Marchants welthy bagges.

But Loue (as Iuy claspes the tree) takes holde,
On vertue, which is seated in the minde,
And eke on Beautie pleasant to beholde,
Neuer hoping for a better hap to finde,
Then for to yeeld when heart on hope is paund,
And to obey when honour doth commaund.

Your beautie sweete did claspe my tender breast,
My heart is paund your heast for to fulfill,
Loue in my secret thought hath built his nest,
Honour commaunds I must perfourme his will:
Wherefore within your orient beauty faire,
Doeth wholly rest my wracke for to repaire.

After that she had perused this fancie, she felt her heate to increase, and her selfe altogether overcome with the cunning sleightes of Aphrodites little wanton, that secretly had nowe stollen into her minde, and bended the same to stoupe to affection: for being young and tender, she was apt for any forme or impression. And thus feeling her minde voyling in the furnace of seruencie, she began to consider more aduisedly of the matter, supposing Cornelius but according to the manner of youth, to lust after her beautie, and not to
L 3. meane

The strange Aduentures

meane any trueth or honestie, knowing well, that vnder the fayrest flowers did often lye the most deadlyest popson, and that the Panther hath a noysome breath, though a painted skinne. Euen so the fayrest speeches many times did containe the greatest fraud and deceite: one while she called to minde her meane estate and his high calling, which was such a cooling carde to her hote ague, that she was voyde of hope to finde any thing but dissimulation in him: another while, wayghing how unlikely her hope was to take effect, though Cornelius had for his part meant all things faithfully and truely, being right assured the Duke his father would neuer assent thereunto. And finally shee considered, what great discommoditie it was to sustaine the yoke of marriage: and the great ease, quietnes of minde, and due merite of a single and sole life, preferring the quiet state of the most simple and poorest virgine, before the rich robes, dainty dishes, sumptuous buildings, and all the ambitious ostentation of the stateliest matrone in the worlde. And when she had breathed a little vpon this Period, she began againe to peruse Cornelius fancie, making a full point at euery word, and at euery point a sigh interlaced with some brinish teares, that like orient pearles trilled ouer the roset of her cheeks, finding it impossible to resist the batteries of loue, she verifieth Horace sayings, *Lectus genialis in aula est, nil ait esse melius nil prius coelibae vita si non est iurat bene solis esse maritis*: & therewithal yssued forth thorow a litle by gallerie vnto the comon garden, wherby both to refresh her selfe with the aire, & also taking delight in beholding some thing abroad, where being come, the first object that presented him selfe to her sight was Cornelius, who all alone (being very melancholy) walked of purpose right vnder her chamber windowe, to see if he might take a view of his dearest mistresse. Verosa and Cornelius with the sudden sight of each other were dzenen vnto such an extasie, that for a while, the eyes onely in stead of their tongues deliuered the message of the minde: but at the last Cornelius remembryng him selfe to bee a man, and therefore more animated by nature then she, beganne his proposition thus:

Sweete mistresse, thinke it not strange to see me thus long silent, for that with the sudden viewe of your presence I was so metamorphosed, that I had bene like (with Acteon) to be transformed vnto
some

of the blacke Knight.

Come newe shape : and if I faile in deliuering my mind, it is the faint-
nesse of my passion that procureth the same, being as fearefull to dis-
please, as I am feruent and desirous to attempt : it is said, that loue
doeth make men Oratours, but it seemeth vnto me otherwise, for
that (in my opinion) the sight of the object which a man so much de-
sireth, robbeth him of the sence of the minde : and this is it, that made
Mars to be mute, when he wung Venus by the hand. Wherefore,
sweete Verosa, thinke the feruencie of my fancie to supplie the lacke
I haue in uttering the same. I could with long ambages discourse
of my loue, but seeing in many words lyeth mistrust, & that the trueth
is bare, & needeth no glorious shewes to garnish it selfe : let this suf-
fice, Cornelius loueth Verosa, & his hart can fancie none but Verosa.

Albeit that this pleased Verosa very well, yet stood she in great
doubt, least this his protestation was but a sayned glose to couer his
fraudulent intencion, and not a sereled loyaltie grounded vpon any
faithful resolution: yet notwithstanding thinking it no pollicie to driue
him away with repulse : least by her coyneffe she should procure her
owne discontent, and being in this minde betweene feare and hope,
she framed him this answer. Honorable seruant, (if the law-maker
do not him selfe breake the law, I may without offence so call you) al-
though I am a maiden, and therefore of no great capacity, & also Ve-
rosa, whose innocent simplicitie can not search forth the intricate qui-
dities of sophistry, yet am I not so void of all vnderstanding, as to
swallow the hooke because it hath a painted baite, and to sup payson
because it is tempered with hony : for they which do think euery look
to be loue, euery smile to be a fauor, & euery word which the amorous
louer speaketh, to be an oracle, shall no doubt for euery dram they re-
ceiue of sweet content (while thus they blinde them selues with selfe-
conceit) reape whole tunnes of sorrowful mishaps, blaming their own
credulitie, & cursing the paysoned entisements of alluring vanity, who
hauing forgotten Ciceroes principle, *Deliberandum est diu quod
statuendum est semel*, run headlong to do that in haste, which after-
wards they may haue iust cause to repent at leisure. O my L. Corne-
lius, are not mens tongues resembled to Mercuries pipe, which could
enchant Argus with his hundred eyes, & be as prejudicial vnto vs silly
maides as the sorcering cups of Circes, whose taste though sweet, yet

The strange Aduentures

the operation is pestilent and monstrous. Wherefore when such musick is plaied, we had neede to stoppe our eares, least the melodie thereof would animate vs to follie, and so by suspecting little and trusting much, we should wholly cast our selues away: yet pardon me, Cornelius, in that I do suspect, for thereby I do feare, but not condemne. You would make me beleue that Cornelius is in loue with Verosa, he is a Prince of great renowne, she a meane and exiled Gentlewoman, whose base fortunes maketh her ashamed to enter parlie with Cornelius: he an heire of great patrimonie, & she allotted to a poore and simple dowrie. Can loue be shrowded vnder the habite of contrarieties: will the Eagle nestle with the Owle: or the Lyon harbour in the same denne with the wolfe: or can there be any simpatbie of affection betweene a royall Prince and a homelie and simple mayde: And howe can I beleue, that (when fortune hath allotted such difference betweene our degrees) our thoughtes could be vnited in loue, sith in the knitting of affection, *Aurum est causa sine qua non*: for loue without wealth is like the Cedar tree without fruite, or fire without fiewell: suppose then you fancie my beauty, wherewith you will be shortly so gluttred, that taking a surfet thereon, you will vomite it vp with repentance, and so that which earst seemed most pleasant and delectable, will become odious and lothsome, especially to such as loue with euery looke, who like the Pirte stone freeze inwardly, when they seeme outwardly to burne, and like the serpentine powder that will quickly take fire, but presently be quenched, verifyping the Prouerbe, *Soone ripe soone rotten*. Cornelius, to cut her off from this inuectiue, thought it fitter to iopne issue with her, then to let her proceed any further therein, began thus.

It were very absurd, Verosa, of particular instances to inferre a conclusion generall: what though some did like for profite sake, and doeth it therefore argue, that all should tye their affections to wealth and riches: are Venus hyzines to be furnished with coynes, or her deitie to be adored with a loyall and louing heart: is Cupid to be feed with golde, or to be obeyed in his absolute commaund with constancie: thinke you Verosa, that Cornelius the sonne of renowned Deualco, will harbour such base thoughtes and seruile conceites: as to prize substance moze then honour, and to measure his amours by saving velfe,

pelle, not by lasting vertue: no, no Verosa, thinke not so, but rather beleue this Maxime to be true, that in loue there is no lacke: for it brooketh no exception of want: and where affection is Generall of the field, there alwayes either Plentie pitcheth his pavilion, or Content so tempereth lacke with reason, that the defect of the one is furnished with the vertue of the other. Why then, what doubt, sweete Verosa, if of my constancie, suspect not before you haue cause: for I will assure you, no straggling Aeneas shall prouue me fleeting, nor any false Iason conclude me fraudulent: what though the Pirie Stone burne outwardly and freeze inwardly, that argueth not my heart to be of that operacion: and albeit the Serpentine powder (as you say) will presently kindle, and quickly out againe, yet the Salamanders stone once set on fire will neuer be quenched: and of this make bolde, Verosa, that no disaster Fortune shall driue me to make a shipwack of my affection, nor yet the bitter frownes of hard aduersitie cause me to alter fancie: wherefore, deare Distresse, peeld me not chaffe for pure cozne, drosse for tryed mettall, and to conclude, repay not my ardent and loyall loue with colde and coye disdaine: for beleue me, and let this word conclude all, I loue Verosa, and I hate my life if I be not loued againe of Verosa: with this conclusion, Cornelius sealing his Plea with a deepe sigh, expected answere, and Verosa supposing that his passion proceeded of pure loue, and not of wanton lust, desirous to driue him out of doubt with assurance of her fidelity, briefly returned him this answer.

Oh Cornelius, the iuyce of Selandine is sweete, but it fretteth deadly, and your wordes be pleasant but they might pretend a preiudice: yet neuerthelesse, I am neither so faint hearted as not to dare to beleue, nor yet so curious to mistrust, but that I may promise to loue Cornelius, and also faithfully perfourme the same, so it be without disparagement of mine honour, which is the onely Jewell I haue in this my declining estate. Therefore, sweete Cornelius, such that nowe you are Master of the fortesse you so lately besieged, vse your victorie with such clemencie, that you reap not thereby defame, nor I repentance: wherewith he wrung her hand, and she blushed, and presently both banishing feare, louingly imbroced, and sealed by the couenant with a lease of sweete kisses.

The strange Adventures

Priscus amended: his conference with Florida: their
amorous Poems, and FLORIDAS kinde entertainment vnto
him. Chap. 9.

AS thus they swimm'd in the seas of their
sweete content, the young Lord Deualoyes entred
the garden, which brake vp the conference of these
new Louers, least there might be conceiued any
suspicious of their affections, and so Verosa retur-
ned in great haste the same way she came, giuing
(with a glaunce) such a kind farewell to Cornelius, that with Apollo
he would haue pursued Daphne flying, had it not bene to discouer him
selfe and his fancies to his coozen Deualoyes, whose presence preuen-
ted the same. Cornelius was very glad to haue brought his purpose
to so good an end, referring the sequel of further conference till oppor-
tunitie would giue him leaue. And so leauing them in the sympathie
of their pleasing desires, I will returne to Priscus, who all this while
lay sicke of his ague, the extremitie whereof had brought him verie
lowe, yet he daily mended since the comfortable preparatiue he had
receiued at Floridas hands, the only surgeon that could cure his ma-
ladie: reason being so blinded with fancie, that he had wholly forgot-
ten, that his affection to Florida had procured the losse of his friend,
and finding her looks as attractive as Iet, he perceiued him selfe too
weake to withstand the force thereof, so that yeelding to the necessitie
of his passion, he continued certaine dayes not thoroughly recovered,
though wel amended, in which time the Gentlewomen, and the Lords
of great account came daily to comfort him, which was a good meane
to weare away that wearisome disease, which in the end being cleane
shakt away, fortune offered him very conuenient opportunitie, to ap-
point a meeting to haue secret conference with Florida, which was
appointed to be the next morning in that artificiall paradise, I meane
that Priuie garden, wherein first he had discouered his affection vnto
her: and Priscus hauing obtained a graunt of that which was his
chiefest desire, tooke small rest this night, meditating vpon the suc-
cesse of his fortunes the next day: and by that Phoebus appeared in
the East, he quickly hied him to the place of meeting, and there
missing

Of the blacke Knight:

missing of Florida, because it was so timely he sate downe in a fine harbour, where with the muscull harmonie of the birdes, the pleasant murmur of a Christalline spring that there was, together with the wearinesse of his bodie, (being so long exempt from any rest) lulled him a sleepe, in which time Florida mindfull of her promes, repayred thither also, who sitting by that sweete Helicon to dylue away thoughtes, melodiously warbled out this insuing Dittie.

THe vaine delightes that please the curious eye,
By prooffe I finde to turne vnto their paine,
Such obiectes rare do darke the sence: for why,
The beames thereof reflecting, pierce againe
With double force the faithfull Louers brest,
Vntill by stealth it robbes his quiet rest.

The pinching paine that doeth torment the minde,
Is more increas'd by glauncing of the eye,
Which can no where a quiet harbour finde,
But in the heart, such is his vrgent might,
The vertue then of a light rowling looke,
Vnder a baite doeth hide a hydeous hooke.

Like Iett attractiue, and like pearcing Steele,
The heauiest things vnto it selfe it drawes,
Nothing so hard, but yeeldes: wherefore I feele
My heart is drawen vnto his proscript Lawes,
And pearced eke by force of subtile sight,
Wherefore I yeeld vnto his lawlesse might.

His might hath captiue tane my pensive heart,
His might hath made my haughty brest to bend,
His might hath turned my iesting vnto smart,
His might enforst me scalding sighes to send
From skorched brest, where carefull thoughtes enjoy
Hope of nought els, but liuing in annoy.

The strange Aduentures

When brutish beastes doe chew their cuddes in shade,
Nought doe they care for barren winters foode,
Who knew but shallow foords, feares not to wade:
Euen to each loue in his merrie moode,
(When fortune smiles and holdes him in her lappe)
Thinkes not this calme doeth breede an after-clappe.

FLorida hauing thus finished her Dittie, Priscus awaked with the
sound thereof, would do no lesse then pay her her debt in the same
coyne, whereupon he descanted this ensuing fancie.

IF wearie sleepelesse rest
In nightes doe argue care,
And dayes with dole opprest
To them that louers are:
Then watchfull cares that with my colour grew,
To heate extreme shall prooue me loue true.

Mee loue true, then trueth
Deserueth trust I trow,
Which motiue is too ruthe
In such as grace doeth grow.
No pittie then without desert I craue:
For what I bought I merited to haue.

To haue what faith may reape,
And loyall loue obtaine,
I ought to haue like cheape,
As I doe sell againe.
With loyaltie I purchase all my loue,
God graunt againe that others faithfull prooue.

If faithfull others prooue,
I prize my paine for nought,
If tryed trueth may mooue,
I haue the thing I sought.

If

of the blacke Knight.

If neither may take place, I pine with woe,
Dye had I leuer, then liue and liuing so.

PRiscus with this note finished his song, and presently hyed him to the place where Florida was: where saluting her after the best manner he could, shee gaue him very friendly entertainment, Priscus of a long time could not frame him selfe to speake to Florida, till she did (as it were) *glaciem secare*, taking occasion first to shewe him his friend Moderatus letter vnto her: the which albeit he had seene it befoze, yet perusing the contents, he tooke very heauily the losse of so deare a friend, which Florida perceiuing, began to shake him out of his dumpe thus:

Why how now, Priscus, what meaneth these sighing sobbes, which may rather bzeede your harme then any hope of reliefe, take heede least in complaining befoze you haue cause, (fortune offended with your vniust accusation) a iust occasion of repentance may follow. And if these straying passions proceed of my gentlenesse vnto you, I am sozie to haue bene so ouer-liberall of mine honour, in entertaining you with such kindnesse: if your griefe be for your friend, then reason doubtlesse may well satisfie a reasonable man to be refozmed in such an error: for ought you more to regard a little trauell which your friend endureth in forren and strange countreyes, (where he gayneth more honour by the title and name of a traueller, besides knowledge and experience, which be two so rare and speciall iewels, then would many thousand times counteruaile the labour or daunger of his pilgrimage) then the loue of Florida, which once you seemed to prize of greater value then your owne life. Sure I must thinke if you doe so, that either you did then counterfet, or now dissemble, either of which are two too base qualities for an honourable minde. And Moderatus, no doubt, will retorne hither againe, when he may vnderstand that all goeth well with you, which daily he may heare where-soeuer he is commozant, being inquisitiue (as you may assure your selfe he is) of the state of my fathers Court, and then your ioy will be double, his wished presence repaying with vsurie your late penance for his absence.

With these comfortable speeches Priscus was very much eased,

The strange Aduentures

and hauing well considered the whole circumstance of Floridas speech, which to his iudgement proceeded of a hearty zeale, from the melodious harmonie of her sugred voyce, the influence whereof had so rauished his minde, that for a long space he could not utter one word, till in the end being halfe awaked out of his newe traunce, he embraced Florida so louingly, as though he had bene readie to depart out of this worlde, and esloones watered his cheekes with a new tyde of flowing teares, (proceeding from the unspeakable ioy of his ouer-ardent desire, hauing now obtained a graunt to satisfie his expectation) and also yeelded vnto her aboundance of thanks for this her kind compassion, in relieuing his infortunate and miserable estate: wherefoze he vowed euer to remaine her true seruant at all times, ready to recompence the same: with this and such like amorous prattle, they protracted the time till dinner, about what time, for feare to be discovered there together, (least once being suspected, some watching Argus, decyted by the ielousie of some new Iuno, might hinder the same) hauing vnited them selues in the simpathie of their loues, with faithfull promises and sweete embracings, they tooke their leaue each of other with interchaunged glaunces, and so departed, Florida to her chamber, and Priscus to the Court, where his welcome was not slender, that being his first sight after his so long and daungerous sickenesse.

Moderatus trauaile in the forrest, soze pinched with hunger.

His passing through Vmbria: his trauaile in the forrest of Esina: his complaint being driuen to great penurie: his coming to the Hermites Cell, and their conference. The Hermites narration of the imprisonment of King LOTHVS daughter MODESTA, and the surmised occasion thereof.

MODERATVS determination to vndertake the combate for her, and his mysticall finding of Armour and horse, for that purpose. Chap. 10.

Thus leauing Priscus to bathe him selfe in the pleasant streame of sweete content, being now master of his desire, let vs againe returne to Moderatus, whome we left in the Forrest, readie to bend the course of his pilgrimage which way destinate direct

of the blacke Knight.

direct him, hauing many dayes trauayled in the desartes of that countrey, wherein no aduenture happened worthe memorie, but that hee was put verie often in great daunger of his life with wilde beastes, hunger and thirst also troubling him very sore, hauing no other foode, then such wilde fruites which the Forrest did peeld vnto him.

In this sort, with very small rest he passed through the wilderness of Liguria, and entred the plentiful and fruitfull Countrey of Picenum, which was a very pleasant and delectable soyle, and replenished with many fayre Cities and Townes, wherein he well refreshed him selfe with vittayles and lodging, vnderstanding of the inhabitants of that place, that he was not past threescore leagues from Spoletum a Citie in Vmbria, where the famous King Lothus, Prince of that countrey, helde his Court: wherefoze he determined befoze all other things to visite the same, both to suruay the manner and order thereof, and also to visite his vnkle Byndon which attended in the Kings Court, from whom he had heard no newes by word or wryting, since Priscus (his faithfull and assured friend) brought salutations from him to Deuascos Court: on this determination he set forwarde towards Spoletum, & found very easie wates and plaine passages till he had past the riuer Esis in Vmbria, where he was to passe through the great Forrest of Esina wherein he trauelled certain dayes very readily, finding fayre pathes and plaine broad wayes, till being come further into the forest, the remembrance of his old griefs made such a fresh wound in his minde, that the pangs thereof brought him cleane out of his way, howbeit he wandred many dayes in those desarts, neither finding way to get out, nor place to take any rest in, till at length being ouer-wearied with labours, and overcome with faintnesse for want of foode, the heate of the day being also very extreme, he sought out a cold shade somewhat to ease his wearied limmes, and hauing (for that purpose) steppd a little to the thickest of the woods, he espied a faire Beech tree growing vpon a fine greene banke, dame Flora hauing checkered the ground with curious knots of sundry flowers, bounding vpon a faire fountain, the beauty wherof seemed so glorious, that he supposed it to be the howze, which Venus had prepared to dally with her louing Adon, wherein (althogh he was

The strange Aduentures

now very pensive) he tooke marvellous great delight, vpon the which he stretched his wearie limmes, and began to meditate with himselfe of his fortunes in this manner.

Ah Moderatus, how infortunate art thou, that the fates haue loaded thee with more cares then peeres, and with more misery then thy tender age could well sustaine: menacing thee daily with a dismall ende, thy chiefe hope resting in death to extinguishe thy pinching penurie: being assured of nothing, but that the date of thy life shal be replenished with extreme wants, fortune not contented with thy meane mishappe in that thou art an exile to the countrey, and from a free libertine of Florence brought thee to be a hireling to Deuasco: but also infusing into thy minde a rash and vnadvised resolution, to vndertake a voluntarie exile from thy Parents and friends, the weight of which rash attempt, now thou feelest so heauie, that thou art like to pay the charge thereof with no lesse then the price of thine owne life: but what then, fond Moderatus, dost thou feare death: or art thou such a coward, as to be dismayd at euery puffle of aduerse fortune: Shall she triumph in the conquest of thy minde: and laugh, beholding thee to take thy miserie so impatient, when as otherwise in brooking all things with content, thou dost countercheeke her pride with patience, which is the sharpest incounter that can be giuen to her insolencie: feare not then, Moderatus, (for thou must die but once) and willingly yeeld thy life a sacrifice to perfect so rare a faith, and let the same be a mirrour to the world to expresse thy approoued fidelitie, so shall thy name be eternized in the booke of memorie, and thy pure friendship be a president of faithfull hearts, and also the loadstarre to guide all vertuous mindes to that happy and honourable bower of modest and chaste loyaltie. Ah, but alas, I feare not to die, but I tremble at the manner of my death, might I but encounter with my launce some stout warriour, and so perish in his hands, it would nener grieue me: for as the Italian prouerbe is, Morire nel-la guarro, eletto del honore: but thus to famish with hunger, yea, and withall in desarts vnknownen, where no sooner then my brest forsakes my panting brest, but the vmbles of monstrous and rauening wilde beastes will be my graue, and so the sonne of renowned Perduratus will be throwen to the well of Oblivion: for that no Act
of

of the blacke Knight.

of his worthe memorie remaineth extant after his decease: feeling then to dye so desperately is the marke of a brutish faint-heart, flie flouth, plucke vp thy heart, and wander yet somewhat in these desarts to seeke some aduentures, to see if good fortune will present thee with a calme after so bitter and sharpe a storme. In this moode Moderatus very faintly rose vp, and entred further into the woods, where (by good hap) vpon a sudden he espyed out of a Rocke hard by, a little smoke to issue out at a narrow hole, which was the onely entrance vnto the same: whereat he made good semblance, supposing that some kinde of people inhabited there, and not minding to delay the time, and burne vp daylight in friuolous cogitations, he boldly entred the same, the going in was very darke, but being come somewhat further therein, a little more light appeared, proceeding from a hole which was in the side of the Caue towards the East, which made it something more lightsome: by this light he descried a good olde man, sitting in a seate digged out of the hard Rocke, his hoarie hoarie haire (being messengers of the winter of his age) seemed to couer a treasure of experience, being a perfect Idea of a penitent and mortified minde: for he sat there in a surcoat of Gray, leaning his head on his hand, and his elbow on his knee, breathing forth skalding sighes, and shedding aboundance of teares, earnestly beholding the earth vnder his feet, as though he expected that the same would presently gape, and open her deuouring Thames to receiue him therein. Thus like a man in a trauance he rested a pretty while, till in the end shaking off these melancholy passions, with a more pleasant countenance, and smiling, as it were, at some secret conceite, he chaunced to cast vp his eyes, and beholding a stranger to enter vnto the closet of his secrets without his licence, he so fiercely bended his browes, that the furie of his countenance discovered he had bene a man of no meane thoughtes. Moderatus all this while being in a browne studie, viewing the strange manner both of the Hermites lodging, and also of his passionate behauour vnder so graue a countenance, had forgotten as much as to salute this good olde Father: who seeing this rude and inhumane intrusion, shakt him out of his memento with this sharpe reprehension.

My friend, if thou maist not rather be tearmed a priuate enemye,
that

The strange Aduentures

that thus by intruding thy selfe vnto my secrets, hast increased my griefe, & brought thy self in suspicion of a guilty conscience: my friend, I say, what chance hath brought thee here vnto this my poore lodging, to discouer the penitent and passionate perplexities of my withered and decaying peres: if purposely haue vnderstood of my residence in this place, thou camest to reioyce at my misery, euill mayest thou churle in so wicked a determination: but if a Pilgrime and a traueler, that by chaunce dost discouer this my secret and poore Cell, returne as thou camest, thy offence (proceeding of no malice) is already pardoned. Moderatus herewith awaking out of some secret imagination he was in concerning the strangeness of the place, & manner of the person, acknowledging his error, replied vnto him thus.

Good Father, pardon this my rashnes, and assure your selfe it was done rather of ignorance then of malice, and proceeding rather of extreme want, being almost famished with penurie, then of any priuate determination to vndermind your secrets, or yet any speciall desire to be acquainted with your miserie, the which, as I do vnderstand, doeth much bere you but nothing at all pleasure me: and now to purge my selfe of this committed crime, you shall vnderstand that I am a poore trauailing pilgrime, a mere stranger in this countrey, & therefore vnaacquainted with these difficult passages, though so dangerous and vnpassable a wilderness, which is the occasion that I wander in this forest, this foure or fve dayes without any maner of food to sustaine my body, and to satisfie nature, which hath brought me so low, & made me so feeble, that except some remorice be taken of my extreme penury, I am like thus brutishly to perish for lacke of sustenance: wherfore good reuerend father, I hartily desire you, (if a strangers penitent submission may take place) to pardon my willing, though not witting offence. And if the omnipotent Creator of all things, hath bedewed downe any pittie or compassion amidst these wilde desertes, let me obtaine some succour at your hands.

The gray-headed old father, with teares in his eyes and griefe in his hart, as one that had sufficiently experienced the trial of such hard fortunes, greatly pittying the lamentable case of so goodly a young man, being now fully satisfied vpon his protestation, that there was but good meaning in the vnerpected presence of Moderatus, he held
him.

Of the blacke Knight:

himself contented therewith, & assured Moderatus that for such homely sustenance, as the Cel of a pooze hermite could affoord, he was hartily welcom, for, quoth he, this my pooze lodge is not replenished with any store of dainty dishes nor fine cates, yet fully furnished both with such viands as may suffice nature, & also with peremptory & resolute content: neither do I delight in such drugs as may procure appetite, but rather contented with a few roots, & such other wild fruits as this Forrest doth yeeld, only to satise and preserve nature: thus my friend, hast thou heard how wel I am stored, & lest thou shouldst thinke that I dissemble with thee, come hither, thine eyes shalbe a witnes of the truth, & thy stomacke shall prooue how it can digest hard fare, as penitent persons dyet them selues withall. By this, he had brought Moderatus to the storehouse where all his provision was, there he feasted him with the best refreshing his friendly and gentle host could (for the time) provide for him, which being done, Moderatus loaded the olde Hermite with heapes of thanks, and then, quoth he vnto him, (being desirous of newes) I heartily desire you, reuerend father, to let me vnderstand how farre it hence to Spoletum, and whether Lothus prince of these countries keepeth his Court there, or where els. And further, what newes in the Court, or what late accidents hath there hapned worthe of remembrance: to passe away the time, vouchsafe to gratifie this my request.

Well had this good olde Hermite skill of curtesie, nature hauing dealt very frankly with him, in giuing him a curteous disposition: & nature toynd with trauell and experience had allied him to good maners, so that he iudged all curteous and friendly demaunds, to be answered with like curtesie, and therefore he returned this answer.

My sonne, very glad I would be to pleasure thee any way I could: for, beleue me, when I heard of thy misfortunes, it pittied me to see thy extreme necessities, & surely I iudged fortune either blind (as the poets saue her to be) or a very niggard in disposing of her fauours, that would load one of so few yeares & gentle disposition, with such a ponderous burthen, and not rather aduance him to the highest note of a quiet and happy life: and surely, had I not my selfe experienced part both of her fauours and frownes, and that so inconstant and mutable, that shee well witnessed her footestoolle to be round and a

The strange Aduentures

rolling stone which is euer fleeting: I would with vehemencie ex-
claymed against her for this her hard sentence, and very sozpy I am,
that I can not thzoughly satisfie thy demaund, being altogether a
stranger both to the Countrey and inhabitants thereof: for that my
natiue soyle is in great Brittain; and therein hauing spent the prime
of my yeares in friuolous and youthfull fantasies, became in mine
age a penitent Pilgrime, to make satisfaction for my former follyes,
and thus farre I came, where viewing a place so solitarie and conue-
nient to weare out the rest of my dayes in deuotarie Orisons and
Prayers, I bequeathed my selfe nowe in the winter of mine peeres,
(hauing shaken handes with al pleasure) to punish my bodie with hard
and austere discipline, thereby to make satisfaction for the great
multitude of my former trespasses: thus thou mayst perceiue, howe
that very litle I can satisfie thy request: but for newes, because thou
art so desirous thereof, I will tell thee a very dolefull tale, that one
passing by this way, declared vnto me, which now lately happened in
King Lothus Court, and I thinke as yet it is not fully finished: and
thus it is.

The fayre Lady Modesta, daughter to the King, was of malice
by Countie Delamure accused of fornication, with a Florentine na-
med Byndon, a Gentleman very much beloued: yet because he
was a stranger, the bloody minded Delamure could not so boldly
forge such treacherie, and commit such mercilesse massacre against
any, as towarde him: this accusation proceeded not of any enmitie
betweene him and Byndon, but of meere malice to vertuous Mo-
desta, in whose life and conuersation (as it is credibly reported) there
is liuely portrayed out a perfect Mappe of modest chastitie, and ver-
tuous humanitie: wherefore the hardest heart would be dissolued in-
to teares, for pure compassion of such crueltie. Then quoth Mode-
ratus, how know you that she is innocent, and if this proceedeth but
of your coniecture, you may very well be in a wrong boze: for wo-
men be wily cattell, and sometimes vnder the habite of counterfet
grauitie, they hyde a most vnchaste and wanton desire, and so blinde
and deceiue the simple and plaine meaning man in his coniectures,
and indeede I tell you, I much maruell that one of your peeres and
experience, should without some speciall knowledge iudge so well of
the

of the blacke Knight.

the Feminine gender, without that it was your fortune neuer in all your life to haue dealings with any, or that the Planets were in such favourable aspects at the time of your birth, that they assured you of truth where you committed any trust. And as Moderatus was about to proceed further in this matter, the olde Hermite did cut him off with this replie.

My sonne, thou art much to blame to iudge so hard of women, or to thinke me so credulous : for as the one is not alwayes bad, so in the other I would not be lightly carryed either to like or mislike, without reason should induce me thereunto : and therefore, omitting the case in generall touching all women, I will speake in particular of this matter, assuring you that all which I speake, grewe vpon a probable reason, being informed of the truth by one of the parties priuie to the conspiracie : so now marke, and you shall heare the discourse thereof.

County Delamure, being a gallant and braue Courtier, fell in loue with the Lady Modesta, whose beauty and conuersation moued him to extreme heate, that he might truly say,

Sed scio quisquis amat vratur igne graui :

And being in this extremitie of passion, he prosecuted his loue vnto her very earnestly, by all wayes and meanes that possibly he could, which neuerthelesse grew to small effect : for that Modesta was not yet resolved to entertaine or fancie any, and if she had, hardly could she haue bene contented to like of him, because he was so peremptorie, that it seemed he rather expected for it by commaunds, then endeauoured to merite it by desert. Wherefore the chaste Modesta suspected his fancie to be but fayned, proceeding rather of lust, then of any pure and vnsported loue, and therefore gaue him an absolute answer, no further to prosecute his suite vnto her : and in the ende (driven thereunto by importunitie) she gaue him straight warning not to trie her patience any further, nor to disquiet him selfe with her denials : for if he did (if none other meane could take effect) she said, that she would acquaint the King her father therewith, and then haply he should repent him but too late.

Countie Delamure taking this repulse very grieuously, with great rancoz and malice in his minde, neuer ceased to inuent and devise

The strange Aduentures

uise meanes to defame Modesta, and thus at last he brought it to passe. First, he compacted with one of Modestas Gentlewomen, which was neere about her called Ambideza, and hauing corrupted her partly with gifts, partly with promise of marriage, to keepe his counsell and to further his enterprise, interchangeable othes for performance of eyther of their promises past betweene them: Delamure hauing the plat ready in his head, said vnto her thus, then (my sweet Ambideza) must thou in thy Distresse name repaire to Byndon the Florentine, who, as I thinke, is somewhat fauoured of her, and tell him, that thy Distresse willeth him soone this euening, to repaire to her chamber when they are at supper, and that thou wilt be there ready to let him in, where he shal stay til thy mistres come vnto him, to commune of some speciall matters, she would haue none priuie but them both: that done, if he commeth, (as I am sure he will) watch for him there, and bring him to the little closet hard by her chamber, where leaue him, and giue me some watch-woorde of his being there, and then may I haue opportunitie, to requite an euill turne he hath done against me. Ambideza well contented to doe any thing, were it neuer so farre from reason and conscience, to gaine so honourable a husband, promised to satisfie his will, which accordingly she did. And Byndon, vnwitting what banquet was prepared for him, faithfully giuing credite to the messenger, knowing her of some trust with her Distresse, repayed at the time appointed, through a strange gallery he well knew, to Modestas chamber, where Ambideza watched his conning, and brought him to that little Closet, from the which there was an entrance both to Modestas chamber, and also to the gallerie, through the which Byndon had thither repayed, and hauing shut him in, she presently gaue the watch-woorde to Countie Delamure, who being very glad, that his purpose was brought to so good a passe, made one or two of his vassals and bond-slaves priuie of his pretence, whome he had well aduanced for such a purpose: and when he had well schooled them, what they had to say when the matter should come in question, he watched the time of Modestas going to prayer, which alwayes she vsed to do by her selfe alone, an hower or two before bed time: and when he had espied her to forsake the presence, and all alone to depart, he thought it his fittest time to worke

of the blacke Knight.

worke his mischievous intent, and so together with those that he had dealt with therein, he secretly came to Modestas chamber, who hauing made her selfe ready to prayer, was opening the closet doore, where Byndon was, (God knoweth, ignorant that any body was within) County Delamure vnseene of her was hard at her heele, and as soone as she had opened the doore of the closet, entred in with her, and presently Bindon, who was within, seeing more then Modesta to enter the chamber, suspected presently some treason, & sought in al haste to conuay him selfe at the backe doore which entred to the gallery, there had the County appointed one of his men to watch, & had giuen him instructions, if Byndon sought that way to escape, that he would presently thrust him in with his rapier, which accordingly took effect, and so very villanously was Byndon murthered by his direction: to couloz which diuillish practise, and to the full consuming of his wicked intent, he repaired forthwith to the King, and informed him that he, and some others passing through a strange gallery in his Highnesse Court, had discouered a great crime committed in his royal Pallace, which was no lesse then the deflowring of his owne natural daughter, and shewed him further the manner of the apprehension, and how Byndon being the offender would haue made escape, so that his man to saue his owne life, was forced to kill him: for that Byndon was so earnest to get away and had so prest vpon him, that he could not otherwise remedy the same.

The King hearing what Delamure said, so chaunged colour, that he seemed rather a ghost then a liuing creature, being at the first ouercredulous, induced so to thinke, because Byndon was in such a place, the secrecie whereof was of sufficient authoritie to forbid any the entrance thereunto, but to such as Modesta specially licensed, grieffe & anger striving for superiority, in great rage & without examining any further of the matter, very vnnaturally did command his daughter to be imprisoned: who finding the malice of her aduersary to haue overcome her innocency, submitted her selfe, according to the necessity of the time, to the stormy blastes of double faced fortune: yet not ceasing to reclaime against such villanous and bloody murther, executed vpon guiltlesse Byndon, whose innocent blood cryed to the heauens for reuenge of so great a treachery: which iust and pittifull complaint

The strange Aduentures

increased the ielousie of suspicion against her, whose cleare conscience waighed not of any vniust disparagement, so that in answering this false accusation, she shewed so resolute a determination, that argued a valarous and noble minde in one of the female sexe, which had bene sufficient arguments to repulse this scandalous and false accusation, if the credite of her accuser had not bene of such great estimation: yet neuerthelesse she was admitted to haue her champion, so that any, or as many as would come within thre moneths, should be lycensed out of what Countrey so euer he come, to vndertake the defence of Modestas good name, impeached by that tyrannous Countie: and in default of accomplishment thereof, Modesta should according to the law, suffer the paines of death. This sentence pronounced, she was carried againe to the same prison she was in before, where she remaineth this fortie dayes without any hope of enlargement: the mightinesse of Delamures countenance, and his valiant exploytes as well at home as in forren countreies, doeth so terrifie aswell denizens as strangers, that hetherto none durst presume to commit his person and honour to so great a daunger, as to offer him the combat, yea though neuer so confident of the equitie of the cause. Ambideza, seeing the matter to come to this predicament, determined to conuay her selfe secretly out of the way, nowe but too late remembring that many loue treason, but none loue the Traicour: making no other reckoning, but that Delamure made her an instrument, to bring to passe his bloody and inhumane reuenge against her mistresse, and then haply he might worke some meanes to cut her off, for feare his treason should come to light: feeling also some remorse in her conscience of this bloody practise, which throzow her meanes was like to pzooue a dolefull tragedie: here my sonne, quoth the Hermite, you heare the trueth of the cause, for that Ambideza bequeathing her selfe to a Pilgrimes life, thereby to endure some penance for her grievous offence, happened to light on this my Cell: and because, as it seemed vnto her, I was a religious man, in the way of deuotion she confessed the same vnto me.

Moderatus giuing attentue eare vnto all this discourse, was mooued with great commiseration of Modestas infortunate misery,
a bzaue

of the blacke Knight.

taking the murthering of Byndon his vnkle verie beautifull: yet like a braue minded Warriour, resolving rather to reuenge an iniurie committed, then to mourne for the losse of his friend, meant to take opportunitie by the foote, and either to free Modesta from the imminent danger she was in, or els to offer his carcasle as a sacrifice, to finish the obsequies of his beloued kinsman, and innocent Modesta: and therefore made great noyse to the Hermite, for horse and armour to attempt this combate, making no doubt but shortly to qualifie the arrogancie of that blood-sucking traitour. The Hermite noting the honourable resolution of his minde, iudged him to be a man of some great bountie. And thereupon calling to memorie, how that walking to take the benefite of the ayre, he had espied hanging vpon a Pine tree fine blacke armour, and therefore nowe he brought Moderatus where the same was, who betolding the same, espied this poesie ingrauen in the barke of the tree in Italian letters, and to this effect

None may this sharpe and cutting sword vncase,
But to redeeme the daughter of a King:
Nor any Knight this Armour bright vnlace,
Nor of his vertue bragge in any thing:
But he therewith that shall a Tigre tame,
For to defend a princely virgins name.

When he had well perused ouer the Poesie, and told the Hermite the meaning, who had small skill in the Italian tongue, he assayed to take downe the armour, yet fayled in effecting his desire, for that all his strength was too weake to dissolue that inchantment: who, perceiuing some misterie to be therein, prooued another way to recouer the same, and therefore he quickly griped the handle of the sword, which without any great difficultie he vn-sheathed, and then finding all other meanes insufficient to enioy so great a Jewell, with the fine cutting sword he squared the enchanted bandes, which fixed the Armour to the Pine, wherewith the same fell to the ground, at the fall whereof very great and fearfull noyse was heard all thereabouts: also a thicke myst and darknes so couered them, that they could scant see one another, great lights & flashings of fire amid this darknes appeared. Thus very miraculous and
fearfull

The strange Aduentures

fearfull with great thunder & earthquake this enchantment was dissolved, & by that light appeared againe, the Vine-tree, whereupon the enchanted armour hanged, was missing, and in the place where it had bene appeared a very faire horse wel & richly furnished, which mooued them to very great admiration. Neuerthelesse Moderatus was very glad thereof, hauing recovered such a goodly steed, & so sure & strong armour, hauing now an assured confidence in the successe of this enterprise: by this the day was far spent, & it drew towards night, & therefore the olde Hermite very curteously offered Moderatus such simple lodging as his poore Cell could afford, who willingly accepted thereof, and so both returned againe to the Hermites poore lodge, and time of repast being not yet come, the good old father to daine away the time, began thus to parlie with Moderatus.

The Hermits exhortation to Moderatus, and encouragement towards this enterprise His departure from the Forrest of Esina His arriual to king L O R H V S Court vnder the name of the blacke Knight. His combat with Countie Delamure the false accuser of innocent M O D E R A T A, and his victorie.

Chap. II.

M Sonne, now maist thou see how fickle and transitorie the state of mortall men are, neuer satisfied in making sufficient ostentation of their glories, Dum flauent velis aura secunda, who giuing their barks a full sayle, are very often in the midst of a very pleasant calme, ouerwhelmed with a most cruel storme, who in sleepe of a happy and quiet harbour, meet with a fearefull and dangerous shipwacke. Well also maist thou see, that in danger, which is the extremest of all extreames, some escape this great perill with planks, boards, rafters, and other such like engines and instruments which good fortune yeeldeth vnto them at the time of their extreme need: other being of greater feare & lesse valour, do like brute beasts desperately perish, their heartes failing any way to shift for the safeguard of their owne liues: such is the disposition of nature, that she hath framed some bolde & venterous, others cowards & fearful, trembling at euery wind, and ready to yeeld at euery puffe of aduerse fortune: who like the shel-fish when the Moone waxeth do increase, and in the waine thereof diminish: so they depending vpon fortune, one while are mighty

Of the blacke Knight:

mighty & puffed by with ambition & pride: another while being cross in their determinations are miserable, & stuffed by with seruite care and feare, euen as Ramunfia (which is tearmed to be the goddesse of vengeance) doth alter and change her copie: for as the riuer Nylus is alledged of some wryters to bring famine into Egypt, when either it ouerslowed eightene cubits, or rise not so high as twelue: so in like manner fortune being ouerprosperous, or too much malignant, doeth blind and detect the good motions of the minde, either with extreme griefe or inextinguishable ioy, both which derogate from vertue so much as by the same they do arrogate vnto vice: waigh this with thy selfe aduisedly, that mortall creatures continually saile betweene Scilla and Charibdis, where seeking to auoyd one danger they fall into another: for if they couet to be valiant & famous in the world, they must hazard many perils, & sustain many great labors: be not then dismayed though fortune sometimes frowne, for she doth it of purpose, whereby her fauors afterwarde may seeme more pleasant: thou intendest to encounter with strong & mighty enemy, much feared for his magnanimity & dexterity at armes, yet hast thou a good cause to hope of victory, for the equity of the quarrel, the defending of innocent blood, the reuenge of a cruell & tyrannous murder, be (I think) sufficient motives to animate the veriest coward to be desperate: wel, I do know (gentle friend) that this my exhortation is but to heape Athos vpon Etna, or to powre water into the sea, for thy disposition carrieth with it selfe sufficient warrant of thy valiant & resolute determination, & therefore committing the sequell hereof to fortune, I wish thee a happie successe therein.

The hermit hauing thus concluded, meaning to conceale no commodities (which his poore cabin did afford) from Moderatus, brought him to an inner roome being very beautifull furnished with pictures and tables of sundry sorts, which greatly he delighted to behold, & amongst them, one seemed much to excell & surpass the rest in beautie, wherein was liuely purtrayed out many histories, ouer the which there was written in great Romane letters this sentence, *Foelix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*. Moderatus was very inquisitiue of the hermit to knowe the meaning of the histories contained in that table: whereupon fetching a deepe sigh, casting his sight vpon the table, he replied thus. It is, quoth he, a table containing true discourses acted and euented in my countrey of great Brittain, which for the zeale

The strange Aduentures

I bare to the parties it doeth represent, and for a remembrance of mine owne miserie I haue brought with me: rest thee contented with thus much knowledge thereof at this time, for that to discourse thereof at large, requireth longer time then at this time we may conueniently enioy, so great a necessitie summoning you to offer your selfe in the defence of innocencie, which opportunitie being neglected, your trauaile might come too late, either to enlarge Modestas desert, or finish your owne desire. And therefore relinquish that request for this time, and when againe you happen to trauel this way, (which I wish and expect may be shortly with some good newes, and happy end to these new begun tragedies) I will cyte all the whole discourse thereof vnto you, fully to satisfie your longing desire, in the meane time you want not wherewith to imploy your selfe in, and nowe for that it is requisite that you be stirring the next morning, we will refresh our selues with such poore cates, as my Hermitage will yeeld vnto vs.

Well, repast being ended, they walked together to take the benefit of the ayre, yet they stayed litle abroad, for that the waightinesse of Moderatus charge gaue him gentle summons to take his rest, and to make his helmet his pillow for that night, which accordingly (hauing reuerently saluted his gentle host) he did: and all this night could Moderatus take no naturall rest, so that no sooner had Aurora put off her mourning mantle of darknesse, and discovered her blushing countenance, but that he (with a kinde of longing desire to be doing with his new implements) had forsaken the poore cotch he lay in all night, and busying him selfe very diligently to set him selfe in a readinesse, the Hermites assistance was not wanting, who seeing Moderatus so well fitted and furnished with horse and armour, noting in him an honourable and bountifull disposition, who mannaged his horse with such good grace, that the olde Hermit (who in his dayes had bene as much beholding to Mars for courage, as to Pallas for wisdom) conceived that he was one alone worthe of so honourable an enterprize as that was, which he went about: and so commending him to his fortunes, and him selfe to his Orisons, he left Moderatus making some haste to recouer Spoletum, who in short time arrived at a little village about halfe a league distant from the
same,

of the blacke Knight.

same, there he began to be inquisitive of newes from the Court, where he was told that the contagiousnesse of the time affoorded none other, then the very worst newes that euer Aemulia possessed, which was the imprisonment of the Kings daughter vpon Delamures accusation, which all seemed greatly to pittie, accusing the Countie of too too great cruelty. Here did he also learne of one Countie Pallamount, which inhabited in this village, who was Modestas vnkle, vnto whom he repayzed, praying his aduise, and shewing his whole intent vnto him, Pallamount returned many kinde thanks vnto him for his good will, albeit that the great prowesse of Delamure did forbid him as much as once to hope of any good speed therein: yet accepting his franke offer, being the only comfort left for the safegard of Modestas credite, yea her life also depending thereupon: for that was the very last day of respite. And therefore accompanied of Pallamount and some fewe of his followers, Moderatus calling him selfe by the name of the blacke Knight, repayzed to the Kings Court, where being come, the scaffold and all things was prepared for the execution of the Kings daughter, and Delamure remained mounted and armed in the field, to see if any competitor durst withstand his auerrement. The blacke Knight being within view of all, thought it not best to protract the time any longer, and therefore stepped forth, stirring his goodly steede with good grace, till he came before the presence of the King, and then lifting vp the beuer of his helmet, and bowing him selfe with reuerence to his Maiestie, he saluted him in this manner.

Worthy and victorious Prince, the great fame of thy high renowne is so dispersed abroad in the world, that any accident which might pertaine to thy noble Person or the state of thy Subiectes, can not be obscure in straunge and forren countreyes, much lesse amongst thy neighbour Princes, or within thine owne territories and Dominions, which hath made Modesta, yea vertuous Modestas pitifull and lamentable case better knowne abroad in forren landes, then in thy kingdome or in thy Court, yea or to thine owne person: if there were no other reason to induce thee to relinquish this ielousie, thou hast conceived of thy daughter, her vertuous life and honourable conuersation so well knowne, yea aswell abroad as at home, and

The strange Aduentures

in forren Countreyes moze then in her owne native soyle, (so that her modestie was a mirrour to all Aemulia, or to speake moze truly a lantherne to all the grauest matrones in the worlde) might haue bene sufficient shelters to excuse a slender offence, much rather a manifest and apparant innocencie: wherefore I being (as all true Knightes ought to be) bound by the oath of Knighthood, to relieue the distressed and defend the innocent, and hauing (I hope) by good hap, knowledge of the false accusation of thy daughter, (false it must be, vnlesse my fancie deceiurth me, and needes must I fancie her, in whome such royall apparition of vertue appeareth) by the treacherous murtherer Delamure, whose bloody groomes corrupted with auarice, haue villanously martyzed and murthered gillelesse and innocent Byndon, whose blood cryeth vnto the Goddes for reuenge, and whose death I hope to quite with the cruell traytors life that dyspayled him of his. And to that end (shrowding my selfe vnder the habite of thy safe conduct, heretofore by thy Highnesse proclamation graunted to any that would attempt the Combate in defence of thy daughter) I am hither arriued with hazard of my life, and price of my blood to deliuer Modesta from her imminent daunger: wherefore I craue thy Highnesse royall pardon for this mine enterpryse, and then I doubt not by the power of the Goddes, but this day in all your presence to bring her wicked accusers to confusion.

Here the blacke Knight ended his speech, and the King in words and countenance allowed his pretence, much maruelling at his great boldnesse, that durst vtter so hard speeches against the Countie Delamure, whose very name was so much feared: wherefore he iudged him a man of no meane thoughtes nor base birth, that carryed so honourable and valiant a resolution. Countie Delamure being not far off, ouerheard all that he spake vnto the King, which moued him to choller and anger, that like a rauening Tiger he would presently haue fallen to blowes, had he not bene commaunded to the contrarie by the Iudges of the listes: whereupon he stayed, and so with great insolencie he tooke vp the blacke Knight with such vehemencie of speech, that it seemed rather to proceed of a mad and wilde frenzie, then of any balliant and resolute magnanimitie. The blacke Knight replied very litle, smiling rather at his folly, then studying howe to
make.

of the blacke Knight.

make an answer to his arrogancie, and so not taking any great heed to any further speech of Delamure, he stirred his horse before the seate of Modesta, and demaunded her allowance of him to defend her innocencie, who willingly gaue her consent thereunto: yet notwithstanding that he was presently answered his demaund, beautilie now made him forget him selfe: for so long stood he at gaze on Modesta, till the Countie Delamure shakt him out of his dumpe after this manner.

Nowe faint-hearted coward, dost thou forecast by Astronomie, or calculate by the course of the heauens, what shall fall of this thy foolish and rash enterprize. No, no, I tell thee, it is too late so to doe: for no submission shall nowe serue thy turne, neither shall all the friends thou hast be able to redeeme thee from my handes: wherefore make thee readie and defend thy selfe, for longer shalt thou not pause vpon the matter. The blacke Knight not a litle moued with his so great insolencie, first with a glaunce discouered his newe entertained affection to his Distresse, and then casting downe the beuer of his helme, he turned his horse about with great dexteritie, the agilitie of his body very well agreeing with the readinesse of his horse: and Delamure in like sorte was ready to the combate, whereupon their pages brought them speares, Perio serued the blacke knight, for so he was called, that Countie Pallamount commanded to giue attendance vpon him. And nowe both the combatants being readie, the trumpetters sounded, and then hauing taken their full compasse, they so spurred their light and strong horses, that they ranne together like the winde, and presently they met in the middell of the race with such a strong encounter, that the splinters of their mightie speares whistling and making a noyse in the ayre, did giue the beholders to wonderfull great admiration: more speares were brought vnto them, among which they made choyse of the best and strongest they coulde finde. Countie Delamure, hauing by this tryed the great strength of his aduersarie, thought it not best to dailie with him, least in trifling away the time, he might purchase dishonour, and blemish his credite, in that a strange and an vnknown Knight should holde battell there so long with him: and on the other side, the blacke Knight remembryng that he had in hand the
murderer

The strange Aduentures

murtherer of his deare kinsman, and the false accuser of Priscus sister (his dearest friend liuing) redoubling his force in such sort, that he thought it no conquest if his aduersary held out any long time. Thus on either side being stirred with great indignation and choller, they picked their furious steades to runne with great swiftnesse, and the blacke Knight so well behaued him selfe in this meeting, that he burst his speare in small shiuers, and gaue Delamure so strong an incounter, that both horse and man fell to the ground, him selfe also feeling the great force of his mighty aduersarie: for that he had receiued such a counter-buffe of Delamure vpon his visor, that he was quite out of all remembrance, and fell downe vpon the saddle bowe, his horse carryng him all about the field as dead: Delamure receiued small dammage by this incounter, but onely the disgrace of his fall wherein his horse shoulder was broken, which was very good hap to the blacke Knight: for if Delamure had had his horse to followe him when he was in this traunce, he had quickly ended the battell, and albeit he was a foote, and his body corpulent, he made so great haste to follow him, that he came within reach of him, and as he was ready to handfast a blow vpon to finish that labour, the blacke Knight recovered him selfe, and perceiuing that he was so disgraced before the Prince of Aemulia, where he well hoped to gaine honour, not knowing of the fall of his aduersarie, he turned his horse with great furie, where espying Delamure, and on foote so nigh him, with a trice he lighted from his horse, and drew out his sworde, which was one of the best that euer had bene forged of Steele: for that it had bene wrought by wisdom and arte) and so the Countie did the like: then began the battell very bloody and stout, either endeavouring with all his force to endamage his foe. The good Lady Modesta nowe somewhat recovered of a traunce, (although she was yet doubtfull of the successe of the battell) wherein she had fallen in this great danger of her champion, whose death had bene a finall iudgement of her life. In this sort they continued the space of a good howre, without any auantage perceiued of any side, to the great wonder of all the beholders, who iudged it impossible for any humane strength to sustaine so long and hard a trauell: all greatly admiring at the great bountie of the blacke Knight, for that as it grew further in the day, the heat of
his

of the blacke Knight.

his choller being kindled, his force and strength also increased, and his aduersary was perceiued to become more slowe and fainty, yet for his credite sake he encouraged him selfe, and redoubled his blowes with such force, that he had greatly endangered the blacke Knight, had it not bene for the goodnesse of his armour, which no weapon could pearce: yet the blowes lighting vpon his armour as thicke as vpon an anduill in a Smythes forge, greatly bzuised his body, the blood issuing out at his Vener, and in many other places through the ioyntes of his armour, the which the blacke Knight perceiuing, and seeing that it grewe late, thought it not his best course so to trifle the time, and no good done, least a new day must be taken and to end the same, and so his labour but then beginne: and thus resolved at this time, (as it is said) to winne the spurres or loose the horse, he tooke his sworde in both his handes, and lent Delamure such a mightie blowe vpon the visor of his helmet, that he brought him quite out of his remembrance, and doubling the same with more force, afoze he recouered out of his traunce, he ouerthzewe him to the ground, and then laid his foote vpon his breast, and unlaced his helmet to see if there were any hope of life in him, and perceiuing by the moouing of his carkasse that he was not yet dead, in a litle space he brought him to him selfe againe, and thereupon the blacke Knight began to discourse with him thus:

Nowe treacherous murtherer, and false accuser of innocencie, thou maist see, the iust reward of fallshood and treason is to receiue a defamed death for so vicious a life, or rather a perpetuall torment, for so villanous an intent. Nowe thy life is in my handes, and in me lyeth either to giue thee that which thou hast not deserued, that is, to depart hence with thy head: or els in executing of Justice, to present the same to the innocent Modesta, which is too slender a recompence for so great a villenie. And assuredly, in case thou doe not here publikely confesse the trueth, to auoyd the ielousie which might be conceiued of Modestas honour, vpon my Knighthood I will euen execute the very bittermost extremitie, that honour and armes will allowe to be done against thee.

Countie Delamures confession of his intended treason to-
 wardes M O D E S T A, and the cause thereof. The Kings ioy of
 her deliuerie. The blacke Knight his sudden departure from
 the Kings Court: his letter he sent to M O D E S T A, being
 greatly in loue with her. The generall sorrowe in the Court,
 for the absence of the blacke Knight. M O D E S T A s receipt of
 his letter, and her returning of answere thereof by the same
 messenger, & her great affection vnto him. The blacke knights
 trauell in the Forrest Esina: his madrigals. Chap. 12.



Countie Delamure being nowe at the doore of
 death, partly in hope to haue his life pardoned,
 and partly for discharge of conscience, the burthen
 whereof was verie heauie to his minde, disclosed
 the whole circumstance, the manner of his drift,
 and the reason which induced him so to doe, parti-
 cularly as befoze is recited by the Hermite, to the great admiration
 of all them that heard it, howe such outrageous villeny could be har-
 boured in any humane heart: who hauing from point to point tho-
 rowly discoursed thereof: great was the ioy that was made in gene-
 rall, for the clearing of Modesta from that false accusation, but spe-
 cially her aged and carefull father the King, who was much rauished
 in minde with that vnerpected good happie, that for a long time he
 thought he had bene transported into a new worlde.

In this meane time Modesta with all her traine of Ladies and
 Gentlewomen were not meanly glad, hope hauing cleane banished
 away feare, yet feare but newly defaced with hope, in so much that
 the vertue of the one rooting out the infection of the other, caused such
 a sudden alteration in her body, that her wan and pale countenance
 was conuerted to a very faire and beautifull complexion, and to be
 brieft, so louely and amiable she was, that the people had bene like to
 haue runne into an heresie, in derogating the dignitie and honour due
 vnto the Queene of Loue, and arrogating the same vnto her as a new
 Venus, more worthe then the olde goddess, supposing that by her
 there might be borne a young Cupid, in whome the want of the for-
 mer (who was blinde) might be supplied: who being full furnished
 with

of the blacke Knight.

with all his senses, would (no doubt) be moze gentle and lesse cruell. Great reason they had to haue this opinion of her, for that in maiestie she excelled Iuno, in beautie Helen, in modestie Diana, in wisdom and pollicie Cassandra, so that hereafter none meant to goe a pilgrimage to Citharea, nor yet to adorne Aphrodite her shrine at Paphos with flowers, where now might be found only the dead cinders, where old sacrifices had bene, but no signe of fresh fires and new burnt offerings. Venus perceiuing the people in such an heresie, in making an earthly creature copartner of her Deitie, began to be very angrie, deuising with her selfe howe she might vterly subuert and bring in oblivion the great fame of this newe Goddesse, in the ende perceiuing no way to compasse the same, but onely in extinguishing the very cause it selfe: and as all desperate causes require desperate remedies, so vpon the sudden Venus bethought her of a drift to requite this iniurie, which was thus. First, she solicited her deare darling Cupid to vndertake the reuenge of his mothers wrong, shewing him that there was no meane to effect the same, but onely to insinuate her with the loue of this newe Champion, wherewith she was already something moued, and being once scorched therewith, no doubt their purpose would take good effect: for that the blacke Knight meant presently to depart to the Forrest of Esina, to bring (according to his promes) tydings to the Hermite, of his good successe in his late atchieued enterprise, and then his sudden departure would be so great a grieffe to her heart, that in a short space her languishing loue would so alter her heauenly hew, (for the absence of louers breedeth such a contrariue vnto the minde, that it impayreth the beautie of the bodie) that the multitude would nowe thinke it but a blaze, which vanissheth away with euery blast: and by this meane conuert the heate and feruencie of their desires, honouring her nowe as a Goddesse) to a loathsome and colde disdaine, then (despising her as an abiect) in the meane time while Venus schooled her little wanton wagge, to worke a reuenge against the vertuous and fayre Modesta, the blacke knight hauing obtained the victorie, thought it would be moze honourable if he vsed it with clemencie: and nowe after that Countie Delamure had confessed all the matter, and circumstance thereof, the blacke Knight lifted by the beuer of his

The strange Aduentures

hermite, (whose countenance garnished with the excellencie of beauty, his long trauell hauing added a singular grace to his louely and amiable complection) offering with great reuerence to the vertuous Modesta, the disposing of Countie Delamures life or death: for hers was the wrong, and in her hand should the sword of Justice nowe remaine, therefore he heartily requested her to pronounce the sentence against him. Modesta rauished as well with ioy of her sudden deliuerie, as also with delight in beholding the beauty of him, that now had taken fast roote in her minde, refused to accept of the blacke Knights offer, excusing her selfe with a kinde of care, least in being a Judge in her owne cause, she might runne into the ignominie of the popular speeches: and so either be condemned of follie, for sauing his life that sought her death, or otherwise be accounted cruell, in not pardoning vpon the offendours submission: for that it is a great inhumancie to deny compassion to a man in miserie. Upon these reasons she desired the blacke Knight to hold her excused, giuing him innumerable thanks, aswell for her safe deliuerie by his valour and bounty, as also for this his curteous offer, which to satisfie his minde, she would willingly haue accepted of, but feare of disparragement to her honour commaunding her to the contrary. Yet the blacke Knight who was wholly resolved not to take her deniall, very earnestly intreated her againe to satisfie his request herein, which he would account a full recompence for all his trauels. Then Modesta finding her selfe already ouercome with his strange and rare curtesie, and desirous to make a kinde of emulation thereof, in graunting him any reasonable request, and therefore hauing deliberated vpon the matter, and considering that a life full of infamie should be a greater torment to a valiant minde, then a death full of martirdome, pronounced a sentence of banishment against Delamure. Hereupon all was finished, and the clamour of the people was so exceeding great and wonderfull, that the blacke Knight intending secretly to steale away from thence, to perfourme his promes with the olde Hermite, who was his good host in the wilde forrest of Esina, with an intent neuertheless to returne in some vnknewen sort, to knowledge his obedience to the faire Modesta, vnto whome his heart was prisoner: on this determination hauing conueyed him selfe out of the presse of people,

Of the blacke Knight.

people, and now being part in his way towards the Forrest, Perio ouertooke him, who had eyed him so narrowly, that presently perceiuing him to depart, followed him with all the speede he could. The black Knight perceiuing so conuenient a messenger, and one he had also bound vnto him in some sort, with friendly rewardes in recompence of his seruice, he allighted from his horse, and stept into a house in a little village hard by, willing Perio to walke his horse till he returned againe, and there calling for pen, Inke and paper, he deuised this fancie.

THe Ocean seas for euery calme present
A thousand stormes: to howlerly doeth my minde,
While that I doe excogitate the euent
Of things, wherein great mysterie I finde.
With paine I prooue a treble dammage losse,
Sith Fate my heart in waues of griefe doeth tosse.

The wonder late I sawe, wherein I thought
A strange and rare effect for to containe,
Was, when I view'd your face, which in me wrought
Such deepe desire euer yours for to remaine.
That when I finde that hope forbids to prooue,
To seeke redresse, I languish for your loue,

But froward Fate too cruell dealt with me,
To ruminare vnto mine eares your fame:
Yet glad thereby that you redeemed be,
Though I do pine when thoughtes present your name.
In that I can not still possesse the sight
Of your sweete selfe, that sole may me delight.

The blacke Knight hauing finished this Poeme, he closed it vp, and sent it by Perio to Modesta, wishing him further to signifie vnto her, that he trauelled to the Forrest of Esina to lead a hermites life, vntill that he might either hope of her fauour to returne againe, or dispaire thereof, to bequeath him selfe perpetually to deuotion.

The strange Aduentures

noion: and after he had thus instructed Perio what he should doe, and has well rewarded him to make him the more willing to effect the same, he hastened him towards the Forrest, and Perio (although more willing to followe his newe Master,) returned to the Court, where he founde a great tumult, the King being very inquisitive of the blacke Knight, which could not be heard of, the which when it came to the Ladie Modestas eares, she was very much grieved and disquieted, for that she was nowe out of hope euer to haue any sight of him that she so entirely beloued: and as she was in this meditation came in Perio, who hauing reuerently saluted her, presented her with that skrowle from the blacke Knight, which when she had perused, she was verie well pleased, hoping he would not be long absent, (being sicke) from the Physitian which could cure his disease: yet she questioned with Perio about him, who vpon her demand, deliuered her his message by word of mouth: whose entire and faithfull affection choosing rather to wander in vnknowne desertes in great miserie, then to stay in her fathers Court to reueale his fancie vnto her, for feare of offending her which he loued so entirely, her loue towards him began to encrease, so that in the ende vnable to conceale the extreme heate of her passions, she confessed vnto Perio howe greatly she affected him, earnestly intreating him to take the paines to returne againe in quest of the blacke Knight, and she would well rewarde him for his trauell. Perio well pleased with these newes, willingly offered him selfe at her command especially therein: for that he desired nothing so much, as to shewe him selfe willing, though not able to pleasure the blacke Knight, so bountifull he had bene vnto him. Well, Modesta perceiuing the willing minde of Perio to carrie her message, presently framed a letter, and hauing sealed the same, she deliuered it to Perio, as being assured of his fidelitie, whome she had often tryed to be faithfull, requesting him with all speede to finde out the blacke Knight, and to deliuer the same vnto him. Perio presently departed, whome wee will leaue preparing him selfe for his iourney to goe in quest of the blacke Knight, which we left traouelling in great haste towards the Hermites Cell in the Forrest of Efina, who hauing at the last recovered the Forrest, began to thinke of his forpast dangerous aduen-

Of the blacke Knight:

aduentures, and the remembrance of his dearest Modesta, nowe penetrating his minde with fresh woundes, which brought him to a great agonie tormenting him the more, because he had bene but seldome acquainted with such strange motions, being in a great rage with him selfe, that his minde should be overcome with such effeminate passions, so that he thus striving to suppress the fire, (which was yet but a sparke) it rather increased and waxed more and more, that in the ende it did burst forth into a vehement and outrageous flame, which so aggravated his cares, that if he had endured the torture of Perillus Bull, he could not have bene more mangled in his minde, nor by any meanes racked to a higher note of sorrowe and griefe, remembering howe impossible it was for him to enjoy that vertuous and rare Parragon, whose fauour he tendered more then his owne life. And being thus metamorphosed from a free man to a thralwed captiue, from a professed souldiour of warlike Mars, to a bowed seruant of wanton Venus, taking no heede to his way, (these busie cogitations hopping so within his braine, that almost the sence of vnderstanding was quite perished in him) in so much that in this furie, his horse carryed him farre out of his way, before he came to him selfe againe. In this sort the blacke Knight, (for so we will call him yet) wandered these wilde desarts for tenne or twelue dayes, till in the end wearied with his day labours, and his small nightes rest, espying a fayre fountaine with fine greene banks, round about diapered with the pride of Vestas choyle flowers, and couered with the shade of a tall Beech tree, Zephirus tenderly breathing forth soft and coole winde, which made a pleasant murmur amongst the parched leaues of that pleasant harbour, and extinguished part of Phoebus extreme heate, here he went and bathed himselfe in the fountaine, and afterwarde repased his wearie limmes vpon the tender grasse, which was verie pleasing vnto him, but notwithstanding his wonted passions still disquieting him, that he could take no rest, whereupon he warbled out this ensuing Dittie, according with the notes of the muscall birdes, that sweetely chattered vpon the hangings ouer that cleare and Christalline spring.

The strange Aduentures

HOW can I sing, and haue no ioy in heart,
In heart no ioy, a heauy dolefull iest,
A iest, God wote : that still procures my smart,
A cruell smart that breedeth mine vnrest,
Shall I then sing, and can not iest nor ioy,
Nay rather weepe thus living in annoy.

Why should I weepe, or heauie lot bewayle ?
Why should I sobbe, and sigh with sobbing care ?
For herein teares, sighes, nor sobbes can preuaile,
But hope may helpe to rid me from this snare.
The valiant minde condemnes such trifling toyes,
Though cruell loue bereaue his wished ioyes.

O balefull ioy reioysing in the sight
Of beauties flowre, a flowre like Cockatrice,
Whose view doeth pearce the man of greatest might,
And doeth subuert the reason of the wise,
Such was the sight that did inthrawle my sight,
Such was the spight that wrought me deepe despight.

Haue I then pawn'd my credite to this end ?
Haue I my life in ballance put therefore,
Her life to saue and credite to defend,
And brought my life to thraldome for euermore,
And may not hope this curtesie to haue,
Euen at her handes, her champions life to saue,

Despaire not man, thou hast not tryed her truth,
Doubt not before that she an answer giue,
Seeke first for fauour, women be full of ruth,
Though she denie, let no deniall grieue,
Women will say, and will vnlay againe,
And oft refuse the thing they would obtaine,

of the blacke Knight.

The blacke Knights dreame: His deliuering of a young man pursued by a Dragon, whom he found to be the messenger that he had sent to **MODESTA**, and receiued a letter from her again His returne with the messenger backe to the kings court. The report of a great triumph there, which was likewise to be perfourmed at Florence, and the Victor to be rewarded with the Kings daughter. Perduratus restored to his honour and liuing in Florence againe. The gyant Bergamo his victori in Aemulia, and his setting forward towards Florence with **MODESTA** in a triumphant chariot. The blacke Knight his combat with him in the Forrest of Mountalto, and his victory. Chap. 13.

In this Morpheus had befriended him with a pleasant slumber, yet the minde working still, fedde it selfe so long vpon the bone, that he left no marowe therein, whereby so small moisture was left within his body to worke vpon, that it could not intertaine and feede the ordinarie intercourse of descending humours, which executed a friendly office within his body, to disfraught the minde of cares, and to nusse it vp for the time in the bed of rest and ease. Thus hauing but a weary sleepe, as he was neither sleeping nor yet well waking, he heard a pitifull outcrie, and a great ruffling amongst the trees, whereat he awaked and buckled on his helmet, and by that he had recovered his feete, and rushed a little into the thicket to learne the cause of the outcrie, he might see a monstrous Dragon pursuing a handsome young man, and being ready to rease vpon him, the valiant blacke Knight vnsheathed his fine cutting sworde, (being nowe within reach of that ouglie feend) and parted the fire-spitting head from that monstrous and diuelish carkasse, and when his conquest was thus ended, he called the young man vnto him, who was yet scarce come vnto him selfe, being so late in so great a perill, and therefore could not speake one worde, till the blacke Knight hauing narrowly marked him, and knowing that he was the Page by whome he had sent his letter to Modesta, spake thus vnto him. My good Perio, (for so the Page was called) what winde brought thee hither, I am glad it was my good fortune to be the safegard of thy life, take heart, man: for nowe thou art deliue-

The strange Aduentures

red of all thy daunger. Tell me what newes at the Court, and howe doeth my dearest Modesta: if thou hast any tidings from her, deliuer thy message quickly, that I may know the charge of her doome. Perio seeing him selfe in his presence that he came in quest of, and howe he was deliuered of so great a daunger, wept for ioy, and could speake neuer a worde, but deliuered Modestas letter vnto him, the which he perceiuing vnripped the seale, and read the contents, which was to this effect.

GEntle Knight, I knowe not whether I reioyced so much in mine owne deliuerie, being in so great a daunger, as I bewayled and lamented thy abtence, hauing preterued my life and credite: the one exonerating my posteritie from perpetuall infamie by thy Knightly prowesse and valour: the other arguing in thee a dislike of some thing, by reason of thy sudden departure. But neuerthelesse, euen as the one proceeded of thy resolute and bountifull disposition, without any entreatie of mine: so the other followed of a peremptorie resolution, without my priuie or consent. And if thou hast hazarded thy life in defence of mine honour, I will not sticke to graunt thee any reasonable request to recompence the same. Knowest thou not that the Merlion soareth after the Larke, but neuer ceazeth vpon the wren: the Faulcon footeth the partridge, but neuer flieth after the puttocke: the Eagle beholdeth the Sunne in the toppe of the heauens, but neuer looketh downe towards the bottome of the Seas: and Princes beare prince-like dispositions to reward bountifully, and not base peasant-like mindes, to recompence their champions slenderly: wherefore doest thou then despaire: if my beautie hath captiuated thy sight, thy vertue hath imprisoned my heart: bashfull feare hindereth thee to seeke, shamefast modestie forbiddeth me to offer: and yet I had rather passe the limits of modestie (which is so great an ornament to our sexe) and confesse and acknowledge mine owne infirmitie, then so valiant and worthie a Knight shoulde miscarrie. Wherefore I charge thee vpon paine of my displeasure, to returne with this messenger to my Fathers Court againe: welcome thou shalt be
vnto

of the blacke Knight.

vnto him, and princely rewarded, but more welcome to Modesta, and louingly entertained, who longeth for thy presence. Thus resting not well pleased with my selfe, till I be able to pleasure thee, I wish and expect thy short returne.

Thine alwayes unfayned

Modesta.

When the blacke Knight had perused ouer this letter, and had read it againe and againe, he could skant with drawe his eyes from the same, so unspeakable were the ioyes he conceaued therein: but in the end, seeking to deferre the time in reading her skrowle, (being in good hope not onely to behold, but also to embrace her owne person) was with the idle house-wife to be catching of fleas, when her businesse should be in doing. Therefore he plucked up his spirits, and rewarding well the messenger, he resolved to leaue his first determination to visite the good old hermite, (til that he had first returned to Modesta) faithfully determining neuerthelesse, when opportunity would giue him leaue, to repaire vnto him againe, to heare his Britissh discourse, and to bring him newes of Modestas enlargement according to promes. And now being pricked forwards with the sting of a more longing desire then before, he returned with Perio back againe, & such haste they made, that within few dayes they were come to a village very nere to the kings Court, where they lodged at night. The blacke knight being (after his maner) very inquisitiue of newes: his host told him of a great triumph of Iust and Turnament, which was holden at the kings court, and the occasion thereof had growen in this sort. First the King, after the delinerie of his daughter, caused a proclamation to be made, that whosoever could bring notice of him, that had by his valor preserved her honour and life, he should be verie highly rewarded for the same, & when no news could be heard of him, he caused another proclamation to be made, that a solemne feast should be kept in his Court for one whole moneth, during which time, he graunted a safe-conduct to all forren Princes, and Knights of what country soeuer, to passe & repasse: and that during the time appointed, all commers, as well within his owne principalltie and dominions, as strangers, should trie their marciall promise, and Knightly activitie

The strange Aduentures

at Iuste and Turnament, and he which should obtaine the honour of that Feast with martiall manhood, should haue for his reward his onely daughter Modesta in marriage, with this conditton that he would defend her beautie for one whole moneth at Florence, which nowe flourished againe, being but lately by Carolus Magnus recovered from the possession of the Gothes, and the worthy Perduratus the valiant Gouvernour thereof, who (at the time when the Gothes sacked the same, hauing narrowly escaped the furie of their blood-thirsting blades) had euer liued in exile in the desertes of Liguria, and nowe was called backe againe, and restored to his former possessions and liuings, where he not onely erected stately and sumptuous Temples, to worship and deifie the Goddess, magnificent and gorgeous buildings to harbour his people: but also prescribed and established Lawes to keepe his subiectes in good order of liuing: these were the reasons which moued the King to make choice of Florence, knowing that greater company would assemble there, in respect that the same thereof so lately began to flourish. And the reason (as it is reported) quoth Calimacko, (for so the host of the house was called) which moued the King to take this course, was to finde againe that Knight, which victoriously had vanquished Modestas false accuser. These triumphes haue continued these three weekes and more, and nowe they draw towards an end: many worthy Knightes and valiant Champions came there out of all Countreyes, and amongst the rest, one came, which is rather a diuell or a monster, then a man, a Giant he is, which came (vpon report of this triumph) from the desertes of the mountaine Taurus, and as yet since he came none can with him twice, for that he vnhorsed euery one at the first encounter: and this is like to carrie her away, much against her fathers will, and nowe the King is loze to haue graunted any such conditions to the victor: but sith there is no remedie, he caused to be made a triumphant charriot to carrie them to Florence, being out of all hope to be rid of this perillous and terrible monster, without that the fresh fame of that newe erected Citie, together with the hope of so precious a reward, should make the number of worthy Martialistes to be greater, and their resolution to be more peremptorie, whereby some one might (by good happe) in the end weary that diuelish feend, thereby

Of the blacke Knight.

thereby once againe to recouer his Modesta from captiuitie. When Calimacko had thus discoursed, the blacke Knight was the gladdest man in the worlde, both because he heard of his Fathers happie returne to Florence againe, with the great fame and renowne thereof, and also to be offered so good an opportunitie, once againe to combat for his Lady: and withall, that before his Father in Florence he should aduance him selfe to shewe his skill in armes. Well, after that he had discoursed a while with Calimacko vpon these newes, he caused his Page to light him to his chamber, where being come, he began to commune with him thus. Nowe Perio, howe likest thou these tydings of thy Distresse, and of that handsome groome that must haue her: very ill, my Lord, quoth he, and worse will my Lady and Distresse fare, if she heare not shortly from you. Nay Perio, quoth the blacke Knight, thou mistakest the matter: for women be wilie cattell, they can counterfet sorowe when they are nothing sad, and lowze when they haue list to laugh, and smile when they feelee most smart: dissimulation is a common practise amongst them, yea and though they should loue entirely, yet are they like the timely blossoms that are nipped with euery frost, they change their hew with the Cameleon, and alter their shapes with Proteus, so voluble is the wheele of their vnsettled resolucion. Quoth Perio, you may assure you, my Lord, Modesta is none of those that is wonne with a put, and lost with the shell: for as without great desert she will not affect, so without a manifest occasion she will not dislike: and for you, my Lord, you may be well assured, she will neuer be false vnto you, and if you finde it otherwise, neuer belecue Perio againe. Well, quoth the black Knight, I will trie if it be so, let vs take our rest this night, and in the morning you shall knowe moze of my minde. Little sleepe satisfied the blacke Knight, deuising with him selfe in what sort he might attempt this enterprise, vnknewen of any: in the end he concluded with him selfe, to send Perio the next morning to the Kinges Court, to learne what time, and which way Modesta should be carryed towardes Florence, and gaue him great charge not to shewe him selfe vnto her, before such time as he should put in practise what he had determined, for the enlarging of her from the custodie of that great Giant. Perio very readily and closely conuayed him selfe to

The strange Aduentures

Court, and he stayed not long, but he came to the knowledge of all: the time of the Turnament being now expired, and Bergamo (for so the Gyant was called) ready within those two dayes to set forwardes with Modesta towardes Florence: whereby (according to the kings Proclamation) to finish his begun enterprize. When Perio had heard this, and had learned which way they would goe, without any tarrying he returned to his Master againe: and when he had declared the whole circumstance vnto him, the blacke Knight was very glad, that they did so quickly set forwardes with Modesta, and that Bergamo was to passe with her through the Forrest of Mountalto, wherein was a very narrow passage at the issuing out thereof, and adioyning therevnto a verie fine and plaine greene, furnished with two rowes of Poplars, (which were sometimes the sisters of proud Phaeton, so transformed, because they sorrowed for their brothers fall) along the same standing in such order, as though they had taken their places there, to behold the rare and strange sight which shortly was to passe that way. Then he caused to be made a Cassocke, and Bales of redde Satten to couer his blacke armour, least he should be descryed before he had brought his purpose to some ende: and caused also a straunge attire to be made for his Page, and when he had giuen order howe thinges should be done, he betooke him to his rest. The next day, when Aurora began to clothe her selfe with her gray gowne, and to blush for shame that Phoebus should be seene to dislodge him selfe from her bower, and that Titan had no sooner set foote in his charriat, and his trampling steedes with foaming mouthes began to ascend, and with their lightes to discover such things that were in the inferiour regions, obscured with the vale of darknesse, but the blacke Knight armed at all assayes, and couered with that red vesture, his Crest plumed with a great bunch of white feathers, mounted vpon his stately white courser. Thus Perio carrying his Target, and riding vpon a fine Jennet which he had bought for him, travelled a round pace towardes the Forrest of Mountalto, and before Phoebus had passed in his course the meridionall line, they had recovered the same, and drawing neerer the plaine, to the which the narrow Angle was adioyning, the blacke Knight lighted off his horse, gaue it vnto Perio, and tooke Modestas picture (that he had procured to be made for

Of the blacke Knight:

for that purpose) and hanged it on a mighty Poplar, which stood in the very nooke betweene the plaine and the Forrest, where no bodie could passe but must needes see it: vnderneath this picture he caused to be ingrauen in golden letters this sentence.

No Knight may passe this way, but must needes either confesse, that she whome this picture representeth is the fayrest Lady liuing, and yeeld vp his Target in honour of her name: or combat for his passage with the Knight of the Forrest, who watcheth here for that purpose.

And when he had placed the same to his liking, he walked aside to watch the coming of Bergamo, who within three howers after, was come within kenne of the blacke knight, who tearmeth him selfe the Knight of the Forrest: then presently he called to his Page for his horse, and mounting to his saddle with a trice, did ride a soft pace till he came to the entrance of the plaine, and there he stayed still, till the charriot came right against him, and then stepped forth, and wished the charriot man to stay, who maruelling to see one alone man so boldly will him to stay, thought skorne thereof and held on his course. The knight of the Forrest full of choller to see the skornfull demeanour of that proud cartesman, spurred his horse till he came within reach of him, & then with his armed fist he lent him such a blow vpon his face, that he crushed his skull in pieces, at the noyse of whose fall those which were already past turned backe againe, & those which followed, hastened forwards. Bergamo being within glutting himself with the view of the faire Modesta, hard at this bustring, & because the chariot stood, he stepped out, & seeing the knight all armed before him, & his chariot man slaine, asked the knight of the Forrest why he had done so, and reuiled him with great insolency, assuring him if he did not answer him to his liking, he should taste the weight of his mighty faulchon. The knight of the Forrest smiling answered, I haue vowed to keepe this passage, & here thou maist see the cause (pointing to the picture) and I wished thy man to stay that I might speake with thee, who would not, and this is the cause: now reade this inscription, and answer my demand. Bergamo kindled with wrath, was readie to runne vpon him with his faulchon, but remembering him selfe better, he looked towards the picture, yet tooke small heede thereunto, but reade ouer the skrowle which was vnderwritten, & then foaming at

The strange Aduentures

his mouth like a Bore, and fretting with a deadly furtle, that any should presume to braue him in such order, he thundered out with his hollowe and bellowing voyce, (his eyes burning like a flashing torch) as followeth.

Proud stripling and foolish yonker, howe darest thou presume to challenge me the combat, that haue terrified so many braue and resolute Knightes with the maiestie of my sterne countenance, and thou lawcie Pinckockes, art so arrogant to set vp skrowles of challenge to me, or arrogate to any woman liuing the beautie incomparable of my Lady, yea and though the trueth were of thy side, yet would I not confesse the same, being so peremptorily required thereunto: for resolute men at armes are sooner wonne with entreaty, then ouercome with force. But I pray thee, whose picture doest thou carrie abroad, thus to her defame and thy dishonour. Quoth the Knight of the Forrest, care thou not, arrogant Monster, whose it is, onely knowe she is the Lady of my loue, and Mistresse of my thoughtes, in defending of whose right, I hope to disinherite thee of thy rest, and therefore make thee readie to the combate: if I ouercome thee, I must be master of thy prize, more fitter for a man then a monster: if thou doest ouercome me, I will be thy prisoner, and confesse (that which I can not denie) that she, for whome thou doest vndertake this enterprize, is the very pride of beautie, and flowre of all the worlde. Although Bergamo might well haue vnderstood by his wordes, that his pretence was to winne his praye, yet he neither tooke any heed to what he said: onely thus much he replied vnto him.

Thou vnfortunate wretch, I will not sticke to graunt thee the honour of a combate, because I would be thorowly reuenged on thee, and then mayest thou thinke thy selfe happy, to haue so honourable an end, as to perish by my weapons: but tell who thou art, that I may knowe the spoyle of whose honour I shall gaine by the conquest. I am the Knight of the Forrest, quoth he, that will shortly quallifie those insolent bragges of thine: but as the Beetle nestleth her selfe in the Sunne all day, and descending thence with a murmuring noyse, is contented with a Towhard for shelter in the night: so thy proude and mighty threates, which now is stretched aboue Ela, will ere long be contented to decline, and to deskant vpon Solfa.

Hereupon

of the blacke Knight.

¶ Hereupon Bergamo called for his horse and armour, and while two of his squiers made him readie, the Knight of the Forrest turned his horse round, and mannaged him with very good grace, and the rest of the company which gaue their attendance on the charriot did set them selues in order in two rowes, the followers of Bergamo on the one side, and those which were Modestas seruants on the other side: they all mused vpon the successe of this stratageme. All Modestas followers heartily wishing the Knight of the Forrest to preuaile, that their deare Ladie and Distresse should not be combzed with such a diuillish Hell-hound, the sight of whome tormented her more then Hell it selfe. Thus all being attentive and standing in good order, Bergamo hauing armed him selfe, and being mounted vpon a huge and mightie courser, carrying a speare in his hand as bigge in a manner as a Pine tree, and stretching his vnweldy limmes in his saddle, that one would haue thought it had bene a mountaine that miraculously mooued towards him: but neuerthelesse it daunted nothing of the courage of that good Knight, but rather encreased his force and doubled his desire to be dealing with him. And thus both parties being ready to the battell, the angrie sounding trumpets summoned them to that bloody conflict, the which no sooner being heard, then these two champions turned about their neighing horses, and pacing them till they were a competent distance one from another, then giuing them the libertie of the raynes, spurred them on to runne like the whirlewinde, and meeting in the middelt of the race, they shiuered both their speares so that the encounter was very dangerous, for the Knight of the Forrest was so shaken therewith, that he was glad to embrace his horse necke to saue him selfe from falling: and Bergamo with the force of his enemies launce was pushed vpon his horse crupper, so that he had much a doe to recouer his saddle againe. And both of them hauing well settled them selues, drew out their swordes, and then the battell began to be bloodie on both sides: but to be short, long and perillous was the fight betweene them, yet in the end, the Knight of the Forrest with great losse of his blood, and danger of his life, was Master of the field: for no humane power could endure the terrible and deadly strokes of that good Knight, so that being nowe in the presence of Modesta, whole legions of men-

The strange Aduentures

thers could not haue vanquished his inuincible minde. Bergamo nowe left groning his last breath, and blaspheming against Goddes and men, renting the bowels of the ayre with his clamorous and hollewe bellowing, his owne seruants flocked about him to lend him such succour as they could, all the rest ranne to the Knight of the Forrest, and submitted them selues vnto him, who hauing dismounted from his horse, entertained them all very louingly, and wished one of them (which seemed vnto him to be chiefe of all the rest) to conduct him to their Ladie and Distresse: for that nowe it stood him vpon, to perfourme the enterprise begun by Bergamo: the Gentleman verie willingly did leade him towards the charriot. Modesta all this while stood viewing of this stratageme, and was very glad to be rid of that diuelish monster, although she knew not who it was that had ventured so farre, to gaine an interest in her, and to whome she must yeeld a possession in her selfe: but whosoever he was, she liked well the chaunge, and therefore stood readie with a chearefull countenance to entertaine him. who hauing ascended to the charriot, lifted vp the beuer of his helmet, and humbly prayed her handes to kisse. Whereupon Modesta narrowly beholding her Champion, partly guessing he should be the blacke Knight by the complexion of his face, and by the valorous disposition of his minde, embraced him with great kindnesse, and wished him to tell her presently, if it was not he that had vanquished Countie Delamure, in defence of her life and honour. Moderatus desiring nothing so much, as to satysfie any request that Modesta should make, and specially to discouer him selfe, where he aboue all others was the welcomnest man in the world: wherefore he made no bone of the matter, but thus framed his salutation vnto her.

The blacke Knights salutation to Modesta. Her curteous
replie, and ioyning in true league of amitie. Their going for-
wards towards Florence, and their embassage sent to P E R D V-
N A T A s Gouvernour thereof. Their abode in a village called
Albavilla. The great Gyant Albanus outrages there. C O R N E-
L I V S and others of Duke D E V A S C O S Court repairing to
Florence to this triumph. Chap. 14.

Of the blacke Knight:



Most noble Princeesse, the flower of all beautie, and
whilome the pride of Nature triumphing in her
owne excellencie, hauing framed so uoble a Treas-
ure, in whose life and conuersation both rare con-
stancie, and the fruite of vertuous chastitie haue
shined moze bright then the Carbuncle in the dar-
kest dungeon, or Phoebus ascending to his highest spheare, displaying
his glorious and golden beames, after a darke and mistie morning, I
say, Modesta well deseruing thy name, and not improper to thy he-
roicall qualities, the very Happe of vnfayned modestie, the carde of
singular and rare curtesie, the flower of ener-flourishing fancie, the
mirrour of mayden-like humilitie, the glasse of neuer-ending glozie,
and the liuely lantherne of true and perfect nobilitie. All haile noble
Virgine, the wonder of the worlde, and the matchlesse Parragon a-
mongest all humane creatures, thy twice captiuat champion, Mo-
deratus sonne to the renowned (and sometimes infortunate) but now
happie Florentine Perduratus, Lord and Prince of that reedified and
late recouered Florence, humbly submitteth him selfe to thy person,
and craueth pardon, if euer he hath wronged thy sight with any rude
fantasie of ouer-willing desire, to excuse my selfe, whercof I can say
nothing, but that in so doing, I fulfilled the commaundement of the
peremptorie & vnccontrolled Deitie of that blind Cipzian boy, whose
shafts pierced deadely, & fire burned vehemently, so that not able to re-
sist the alarums of his fresh batteries, I committed my passions to that
tell-tale paper, which trusty Perio deliuered to mine onely harts-hope
Modesta. My liues preseruer Modesta vouchsafed to compound a
medicine with her own hands to salue my griefe, although by distance
of place it lately came to my hands: wherfore I want not the marks
of a long languishing patient, with his pale and leane cheeks, & hang-
ing & heauie countenance. The medicine I receiued by the handes of
true-hearted Perio, hath something reuiued me againe, and both the
messenger & the potion I do here present vnto Modesta, as the infal-
lible tokens of your true-hearted knight, that vanquished both Dela-
mure & mighty Bergamo to aduance thy honour and dignitie. And if
you suppose that I receiued no damage in perfourming these dange-
rous conflictes, behold the skarres (and therewith vniacing his Ar-
mour) of late healed woundes, and the fresh bleeding hurtles, with

The strange Aduentures

bloody teares craving for pittie at your handes, besides a most dangerous wound which palpably tormenteth my soule, without that you with tender regard of his life, (that willingly will offer the same in defence of your honour and fame) will vouchsafe to salve his soze already like to fester, if without delay it be not looked vnto. Here Moderatus with volleys of sighes, and the teares trickling downe his two Christall chekes, made a full period, resting in a Dilemma betweene feare and hope, and driuen to such an extasie with feruencie of newe encreasing desire, that he could not speake one word, till his Saint, his Sunne, his Joy, his Jewell, I meane his Modesta, accompanied him with teares that trilled like droppes of siluer dewe, ouer the Carnation tincture of her milke-white face, began thus to replie vnto him.

Noble Heroyes, and the flower of all Cheualrie, I hold it not necessarie to mourne when the danger is past, but rather to reioyce in that it is so happily past: but yet to recount of our expired labours, can be no lesse then pleasing vnto vs, for that valiant Troian Aeneas vled to comfort his distressed mates in their greatest extremities, saying vnto them, *Olim hæc meminisse iuuabit*: so haue you repeated vnto me the danger you sustained in working my deliuerie: and surely thus much I must needes say, that as your valour hath purchased my freedome, so hath it also eternized your fame with perpetuall renowne and highest title of honour. I confesse my libertie consisted in your bountie, and such the same relies vpon my beautie, euen the very same which you haue freed from perpetual infamie, shal in like sort gratifie you with vnfaigned loyaltie, which is the onely reward it can affoord for all your sustained trauailes. It is an ill Gardener that toyleth in his garden all day, and can not haue a few roots for sallets at night: and a soyle husband, that laboureth in his vineyard all the yeere, and hath not a cluster of grapes in store to cole his thirst: and so that Louer is unhappie, that in twise hazarding his life for his Mistresse, can not obtaine one reasonable wish. Nay rather that garden were infertill, that vineyard unfruitfull, and that Mistresse too too cruell, that would not yeeld better fruite to such diligent seruants. Wherefore sweete friend, I protest vnto thee, that as my libertie recovered by the force of thy strong arme, hath vncayned me

from

of the blacke Knight.

from the bondes of shame and dishonoz : so thy skrowle sent by Perio, (which thou doest pzetend to wrong my sight) hath very much cherished my late-recovered perishing bodie, because it was from the blacke Knight presented vnto me : but Moderatus pzeſence nowe the ſecond time purchaſing my libertie with the pzeice of his deareſt blood, hath not onely reuiued me from death to life againe, but alſo thereby purchaſed the Fee-simple thereof vnto him ſelfe, if Modeſta hath any intereſt in her ſelfe. Here both burſt forth againe into floods of teares, and teares choaking vp their ripe and mellowed ſpeeches, left ſcant any vent to the breathing ayze to haue acceſſe vnto their panting hearts, to eaſe the ponderous burthen thereof with bollepes of farre-fetched and ſkalding lighes. Thus as it were tranſported into anewe world, ſo cloſely embracing, that as it may be philoſophically diſputed, that louers and friends haue diſtinct bodys, but one minde : ſo it might be nowe palpably pꝛooued, that theſe two louers were but one entire body, with ſuch exceeding vehemencie they clipped that which either of them ſo long expected and earneſtly deſired: thus rauished with an extraordinarie ioy of this happie meeting, they continued a long time in this ſort, not much vnlike to the picture of Mars and Venus, ſet forth in that manner they were taken by Vulcan : they had commaunded all to ſtand apart vpon their firſt ſalutation, and happie it was that all diſcouered not ſo great a ſecreſie. In the ende ſomething awaking out of this ſweete ſlumber, Modeſta led him in by the hand, and called for Perio to vnarme him, aſſuring the Page he ſhould be well rewarded for the paines and trauell he had ſuſtained. And Moderatus being vnarmed, Modeſta very tenderly ſearched his woundes, cherished and bound them vp with great care, and then cauſing the charriot to pꝛoceed forwardes, leaning Bergamo neither alieue, nor yet altogether dead. Moderatus albe it he confeſſed to Modeſta his birth and Parentage, would not haue any other pꝛiue thereunto, till ſuch time, as vnerpected in his Fathers pzeſence, he might diſcouer him ſelfe, if his fortunes in his enterpꝛiſe would pꝛooue happie, otherwiſe he meant not to make himſelfe knowne at all. Modeſta at the firſt ſeemed very vnwilling to holde on this iourney to Florence, leaſt her champion in perfourming ſo many exploytes ſhould at laſt miſcarrie, and ſo verifie the old ſaw :

The strange Aduentures

So often goeth the pot to the water, that at last it commeth broken home, or halfe crazed, but in the ende overcome with his earnest perswasion, she peeled her selfe to his will, and then they trauelled on merrily, till they came within a dayes iourney of Florence, in all which time no aduventure worth the reciting happened: and being come so neere their iourneyes end, they thought it conuenient to send a messenger before, to giue notice of their comming, and to rest and repaire them selues in a fine village that was in the way called Albania, which tooke the name of one Albanus a monstons great Tyrant, which had built part of the Towne, and a great castle which stood in the frontier or entrance of the same, wherein he lodged a crewe of thienish monsters like him selfe, that spoyled and robbed all the countrey abouts, till such time as the noble Florentine Perduratus, who was now restored to his former place and liuing againe, hauing knowledge of the great villanies of this Albanus, came to apprehend him with a great number of valiant men at armes, the which was not so closely determined, but this fowle beast had knowledge thereof, and fled to the wilderness of Apenninus that ioyned hard vpon this village, where together with the rest of his companions, he remained robbing and spoyling all the countrey abouts.

This village of Albania was about twentie leagues distant from Florence, where they continued foure or fise dayes, and there we will leaue them, till other occasions doe concurre to bring them forwards to the prooue of this aduventure.

The report of this solempne triumph already finished in the Court of Lothus King of Aemulia, and now to be perfourmed at Florence, was so spzed abroad in all countreyes, that it came to Deualco his Court, and hauing tickled the mindes of the lustie gallants, (that had any confidence in their skill in martiall discipline and dexteritie at armes) with emulation and desire of honour, so that Cornelius the Duke his sonne accompanied with his couzen Deualoyes, and diuerse other noble and valiant Knights, prepared them selues for Florence, both to trie their manhoodes in this honourable assemblie, where triumphing with victorie they were to enioy so rich a bootie. And also to visite Perduratus, whose kindnesse (they were assured) would affoord vnto them many thousand welcomes, with the best manner

manner of entertainement the time and place would yeeld. And amongs the rest, young Cornelius was more forward then any other herein, because since Perduratus departure from his Fathers Court, he had receiued no tidings from the vertuous Verosa, who was the onely Distresse of his thoughtes, and the Saint, at whose Shrine he offered the sacrifice of his fancie: and therefore was in a very longing desire to visite her at her fathers Court, being now in good hope, such her father was so fortunately restored to his former dignities again, that with the consent of both their Parents, he should now at length finish his long prolonged suite, with the consummation of a marriage betweene him and his dearest Verosa.

Priscus loue with Florida: her inconstancie and change: of his

departure from Albigena in quest of his friend. His trauell in the wilderness of Apenninus, and his great extremitie for foode: his discovering of Poems engraued in the barke of trees, and comfort thereby. His parley with an aged Father, and the olde mans report of a fayre shepherdesse, which the fillie Swaynes courted with those Pastorall exercises. His discouerie of the fayre shepherdesse MERSA. Her song. His salutation vnto her, and her replie. The Swaynes songs. ALBANVS his interrupting of their Rurall pastime. PRISCVS combate with him, and victorie. PRISCVS search for CALVRNIO the Gyants sonne. His ayding of the blacke Knight, who fought with CALVRNIO and all his crewe. Their victorie, knowledge one of another, and ioye. The blacke Knight declared of his loue to his sister MODESTA, and the triumph he was to perfourme for her in his owne Fathers presence, though vnknownen of any there. Chap. 15.



Leaue wee them readie in their way towards Florence, and let vs not altogether forget Priscus, whome wee haue not remembred all this while: who, after his friend Moderatus departure from Albigena, bowing Pilgrimage to effect his friends desired purpose, which (indeede) procured him the friendly countenance of faire Florida, for whose sake he long languished in extreme miserie, so that now Moderatus being gone, loue quickly increased betweene Priscus and Florida to his

The strange Aduentures

full ripenesse, and continued not long in that estate: for womens mindes will waxe with the Moone, and ebbe with the Sea, not vnlike to the flower in Sommer, that to day is glorious in the pride of his blossomes, and to morowe withereth with the least blast of Bo-reas nipping breath. These coye Vnions be such libidinous libertines, that they are both hote and colde, and all in a moment, and will both rashly choose and still couet to chaunge: with this blemish Florida was fowly attainted, for not long after this firme league of euer promised friendship, had passed betweene her and Priscus, it was not thorowly warme, befoze Florida (as women are euer deuorous of nouelties) had pitched her fancie vpon the young Lord Deualoyes, who omitted no agglets, bracelets, ouches, browches, Gems, Jewels, Feathers nor fangles to feede her proude humour and loftie minde, and also wanted no Pandars that for coyne painted him in his colours, and that did set him forth with their flatteries in his best habite, who derogated Priscus praise-worthie desartes, and arrogated the same wholly to Deualoyes, as alone worthy of such a Varragon as she was, there needed but small batterie when the Captaine was ready to yeeld: for these pestilent and deuouring Harpies, were not driuen to spend any long time in perswading of Florida, to neglect Priscus and affect Deualoyes, the which when Priscus vnderstoode, (what thinke you) was he sozie for her ficklenesse: no surely, but ha-ving a little exclaymed against her inconstancie, he reioyced rather, that he might so quickly be ridde from the infectious breath of such a painted Panther: sorrowing in nothing so much as in the losse of his deare friend Moderatus, in quest of whome he determined to trauell. And so consequently when opportunitie gaue him leaue, and that he had furnished him selfe with all things for his purpose, he departed from the Dukes Court, acquainting onely Verosa with his determination, praying her not to discouer either his departure, or the cause thereof to any, who at parting shed a number of kinde teares, for that she loued him entirely, both for her brothers sake, & also for his owne curtesie and gentle disposition. Priscus hauing nowe taken his leaue of Albigena, being well armed and mounted, went forwarde which way fortune directed him, not regarding any course in his trauell (because vncerten in what climate Moderatus sojourned) till in the
ende

of the blacke Knight.

ende he happened at vnawares to range in the wilbernesse of Apenninus, where he trauelled many dayes in great daunger of his life, continually pinched with hunger, and very often put to his shifts by wilde beastes, whereof there was great plentie in this Forrest, so long he continued in this penurie, that he was almost in despaire of him selfe, and alighting from his horse led him in his hand, and so entering to a greene land that was very neere the edge of the Forrest, he espyed certaine characters ingraued in the barke of a tall Beeche tree, whereat he was very glad, thinking that to be a Kalender that people were not farre off, and therefore he drew neere that inscription and read it ouer, which was as followeth, or to like effect.

HAue heauens conspired my balefull destinie :
Haue fates decreed my thraldome to prolong :
Will Merse at all rue on my miserie :
Or shall I euer continue in this wrong :
Woe worth the houre, wherein thou hast bene borne :
Despayring thus like to a man forlorne,

Forlorne : for that thou darest not sue for grace
Of her, who sits like Iuno in her throne,
Driuing the lookers on into a maze,
To whom in vaine I daily make my mone,
Yet at her handes no hope of grace I finde,
That still torments my poore perplexed my minde.

Liue long thou tree, wherein these lines I graue,
And witnesse beare of this my loyaltie,
And how I seeke of her some fauour t' haue,
Whose heart is framed in forge of crueltie :
Then shall I liue though dead I be in graue,
With louers true, and challenge place to haue.

After he had read ouer this fancie, he went a little further, and found written on a Poplar these ensuing lines.



When

The strange Adventures

WHat rare desert hath mou'd my mind
to follow fond desire ?

What fate to fell hath fram'd my fall ?

What fortune did conspire ?

What platt was laid ? what time doth worke
to aggrauate the same ?

What daunger thereof doth ensue,
I attribute to fame.

For had not fame a blabbe bene found,
for to extoll her praise,

That is the causer of my payne,
then Meritas oft delays

Had neuer disturb'd my quiet rest,
for I my flocke had fed,

When I for ease, and they for food
had better farre bin sped.

PRiscus hauing read these two inscriptions, and two or three more
to this effect, recounting with him selfe the great miseries of
unfortunate louers, and howe happy they liued which were not
skorched with the fire brandes of that pieuish god, and seeing now he
be ayined as well at a ragge as at a r. be, and could as well take a
nights lodging in the poore cottages of homely Swaines, as a mo-
neths respite in Kings princely bowres, he greatly pittied the hard
fortunes of the poore shepherdes, who were thus tormented with
the unkindnesse of some coye minion, that frequented the downes hard
adiopaign vpon this Forrest: and therefore desirous to vnderstande
further of this matter, what manner of one she was, that had infec-
ted these haplesse Swaynes with her beautie, he held on a good pace
till he had recovered the plaine, where vpon his first entrance he had
espied a fatherly olde man, with whome he questioned about this
faire and farre renowned shepherdesse, who told him, howe two of
the quaintest and bonniest Swaynes that frequented those downes,
were

of the blacke Knight.

were in great despaire for the loue of her: this olde Father told him also that shee vsed to rest her selfe in the day time, in a little fine thicket adioyning thereunto. Priscus immediatly espying the same faire groue, from whence a fine little current issued out, stealing through a pleasant vale, which made him thinke that there should be a spring: wherefore being thirstie after his trauaile, and also desirous to take some rest, (if haply he could not meete with the fayre Merfa, to sacrifice him selfe in beholding so fayre a creature, as report seemed to make her) made as much haste as he could towards the foresayde groue, and now being come euen to the entrance of the same, he might heare a voyce verie sweetely and melodiously singing, whereupon he stayed, and withdrew him selfe to the skirt of this thicket, and there biding him selfe, (least his presence should interrupt this musicke) he gaue attentive eare, whereupon he might heare warbled out with a sweete note, this Canson following.

BY Vestaes tapers, and her holy fire,
By all her troupe of sacred Virgins kind,
Which vowed are to pure and chaste desire,
By Cybll's wise and sage presaging wind,
Which turne her ordered leaues (as is decreed
By heauenly powers) to good or bad with speed.

By Siluan Nymphes, oft troubled with great feare
In shunning of Siluanus raging lust,
Who still their flaring haire with grieve do teare,
Least rapes they be vnto this god vniust,
Whose horned shape their dammage will procure,
If he them winne to cease vpon his lure.

By the great care of Daphne, flying fast
From the pursuit of Bacchus hote desire,
Whose burning flames hath made the Nymph agast:
To turne whose shape the gods did then conspire,

The strange Aduentures

To a Bay tree, which lasteth to her fame,
And euer groweth Greene in honour of her name.

By Procris rage and byting ielousie,
When by the same her death she did sustaine,
By all the rites of pure virginitie,
And by Dianaes chaste and holy traine
I tweare, (and that vnuolate shall rest,
What euer mishappe or fortune me molest)

That first from Pontus waues, where Isters fall
In braunches seuen is to the raging sea,
Each one of these returne their courses shall,
And backewardes shape the same without delay
(Against the courle and force of Natures seede)
To seeke the spring from whence they did proceed.

Before that Merla mooued with fancies forme,
Shall make a shipwracke of her honestie,
I rather leaue the ficker Swaines to storme,
Then I should feele of loue the tyrannie.
I know not what it is, nor dare not prooue,
Who tryed may say : no heate to heate of loue.

Although that Niſſinen in raging wise,
Pearst with the shaft of the blind wanton boye,
Paid for her lust after too deare a price :
Yet meane I not so wantonly to toye.
I loue no Owles, nor yet their Musicke hoarce :
From such fond loues, I meane to make deuorce.

I like not Venus wanton toying trickes,
With Adon sweete her louing heart and ioy :
I loue not them whome fond desire still prickes,
Nor yet these simpring Dames that be so coy.

I hate

of the blacke Knight.

I hate their lust, I banish their desire,
I will not warme by their fond fancies fire.

No shapes transform'd to gold, to Swan, or Bull,
Shall pierce the fort of Merfias constant thought,
Nor euer my minde in follyes cradle lull
Such vaine delightes, I count them all for nought.
If euer I loue, I will not loue in haste,
Who seekes me so, in vaine his toyle doeth waste

If ought may mooue my minde to stoope to loue,
Vertue thereof shall sure the conquest make:
No light desire veneriall actes to prooue,
Ne any thing my settled minde shall shake.
But tract of time by due desert me leade,
For more then this it booteth not to pleade.

PRiscus, all being hush and silent, espyed narrowly through those hanging boughes, to see if he might take a viewe of this fine shepheardesse: for now he perceiued that it was she for whom the shepheards had made all that moane, and had printed so many Poems in the barks of trees, to be the eye witnesss of their griefes: and presently he espyed this his handsome Pastora sitting by a fayre spring in a colde shade, attired in Sable, and couered with a purple mantle, her temples bound with a garland of Bayes, her nut-browne haire hanging about her shoulders made her beautifull visage (in the sight of these sheheard Swaynes) farre more amiable: for a blemish in all perfect shapes, bringeth rather a liking to the eyes, then a loathing to the minde: els had not Paris called the skarre which Helen had in her chinne, and Mars the mole which Venus had in her cheek, Cos amoris. These iolly shepheardes had sitting about her a great company of shepherd Swaynes, all doing her obeysance and reuerence, as their Patronesse, and admiring at her beautie. Hereupon Priscus shewed him selfe, and beganne to salute her and the rest of the companie thus.

All haile happie Swaynes, who can not choole but be fortunate,
while

The strange Aduentures

while they enioy such fauour, as to possesse the p[re]sence of so goodly a Nymph, not omitting my duetie to the faire Merfa, as the chiefe Patronesse of so goodly a company. I came not here of purpose like a stragling runne-away to robbe you of your goods, but by chaunce guided by good happe, and being come, willing both to satisfie my longing desire, in vewing so fayre a goddess, (I ame menacing reuenge to all that time afforded knowledge of, and did not fill her spring with plentie of offerings in honour of her Deitie) and also being wearied with long wandering of these harbourlesse plaines, and desirous to take the benefite of a coole shade, to ease my wearinesse, and the commoditie of this murmuring spring to quench my thirst, if faire Nymph (addressing then his speech to Merfa alone) by your curtesie and fauour, I may obtaine the same. Repoyt hath filled mine eares with your praise, and mine eyes dazeled with your beautie, doeth warrant your commendation to be but deserued: and same to be rather a niggard then prodigall in decyphering of your good giftes. Wherefore I doe hope that you will not blemish that visage adorned with all beautie, with a minde furnished with coy disdain: and therefore I being a stranger doe desire, (although vpon a sudden I can not deserue) that measuring my actions by the curtesie of a bountifull minde, and leuelling at my desires after the necessitie of the present time, you will afford me that fauour, which the wearinesse of my feeble bodie doeth require.

Merfa hearing the solemne protestation of the gentleman, though maruelling whence he came vpon such a sudden, or the cause of his speeches being a stranger, replied thus.

Gentleman, such your fortune was so hard to light vpon so barren a harbour, you are heartily welcome to such as it is: and though the Crab-tree beareth no sweete fruite, to make Sydar for the daintie tooth, yet it bringeth forth lowze crabbes, wherof veriuyce may be made, which will yeeld good relyce in the taste: and in like manner homely swaynes, though they haue no sumptuous fare that is sweete in the mouth, yet they haue homely cates that is wholesome in the mawe: no cheare to feede the eye of the curious, but the belly of the hungrie, respecting more the sawce which is a good appetite, then the meate which is alwayes but grosse. And with that Merfa reached

of the blacke Knight.

ched vnto her a white linnen bagge, intending to make him such a homely banquet, as the present time and place could affoord, but Priscus presently perceiuing her pretence, refused not her offered curtesie: but after repast was ended, (which was well to his contentation, hunger had so tempered his stomacke to haue appetite to meate, were it neuer so grosse) he desired the two louing swaynes that contended for Meria, that he might heare some of their Poems, which willingly they graunted vnto him, and then Hymon, for so one of them was called, began thus.

H Y M O N S Song.

THou Hebe sweet which in the heauens doest stay,
And to the gods doest heavenly Manna bring,
Fly from the skyes, packe hence with speed away:
In earth below there is a fairer thing,
A Nymph it is, the fayrest of all fayre,
Who (thou being gone) must where thou art repayre.

For Iupiter being moou'd with her good grace,
Will thee despise, and her in stead prefer:
With enuie burst to be in such disgrace,
And dye for grieve. The goddes sometimes do erre,
Sith they so fickle seeme, and chuse to change,
When fancie stirres their wauering mindes to range.

Depatt not yet, from heauen thou shalt not wend,
Vse diligence the goddes againe to please.
Let Meria rest: sweet Meria on earth attend,
My troubled thoughtes and pensiue cares to ease,
Without whose grace nothing can pleasant be,
Nor ought remaine a hearts rest vnto me.

How oft tuckt vp like Amazonian Dame,
With bowe and quier tracing these gioues among,
Following the Deare, or els some other game,
And killing oft the fayrest in the throng.

The goddes them-selues being mooued with her loue,
To winne the same in vaine full oft did prooue. They

The strange Aduentures

They proffer kisses sweet and giftes in vaine,
They garlands make of choyce and finest flowers,
They bring her fruit, but nought of her they gaine,
They smyle and sing, she looketh coy and lowres.
Full of disdain her tramels she doth shake,
Which makes the stowtest of vs all to quake.

O would she were not so hard to be pleas'd,
O would she shewed more gentle fauour to me,
Happier then I, could nothing then be prais'd,
But she reiect' th my louing lasse to be.
She doth despise my prayers, and griefs disdaynes,
She flies from me, which still my poore heart paynes,

O Merfa stay, flye not so fast from me,
Faie Merfa stay, no Lestrigonian bruit,
Doth make pursuit to feed his lust on thee:
But one, if thou him knew, whose honest suit,
Is worthy of the same he doth desire,
And burnes for thee with chaste and holy fire,

And though my corps doth sauage seeme with haire,
And beard vnkempt an vgly thing to see:
Yet am not I deform'd, for beard is faie,
And hayres decent for such as valiant be,
When strong men fight nyce meacocks they do feare,
And Schools to daunce, and not to fence they reare,

If ought for wealth thou likest, a shepheards stocke
I haue, and few doth more then I possesse:
For heards I keepe, and eake full many a flocke,
A thousand kine do feed on finest grasse,
Of swine great store, and cattell fat withall,
And goates in rockes their bleating kiddes to call,

Store of throme milke in season still I haue,

My

of the blacke Knight.

My chest is full of cheeses new and olde,
Take what thou wilt, thou need'st not ought to craue,
For all I haue is thine, whereof be bolde.

My selfe also (though thou the same refuse)
Is at thy becke, thereof to take the vse.

If thou would'st daine to walke sometimes with me,
Gather I would the Apples mellowe fine,
And clustring grapes with full ripe figges for thee,
And Filberds kernels eake if thou were mine:
With these I would thee cramme my prettie peate,
For whome great store of bloody droppes I sweate.

Howe oft would I thy tender corpes then clippe,
And eke the same in folded armes combine,
With thousand kisses would I presse thy lippe:
Doubt not of these: to pittie eke incline,
And come with me (least that my paine increase)
To cure my care, and thiraldome to release.

By pleasant springs our ease then we will take,
Embracing there sweete sleepe will vs depriue
Of wanton sport: when semblance we do make,
Not howe with gaine and lucre for to thriue,
(In silent shades) but of meane mirth and ioye,
When greatest minde we haue to wanton toye,

The hanging boughes and murmuring streame will striue,
Who best may please and worke our sweete content,
While raging force of Summers heate doeth driue,
Howe deare to me would be thy sweet consent:

Alas thou nought dost weigh my giftes, nor loue,
Whose heart faire speach, nor weeping teares may mooue.

More cruell then the Hircan Tigre fierce,
More deafe then th'Images of Marble made,

T

More

The strange Aduentures

More hard than stones that engines none can pierce,
Art thou: in fine whose beautie sure will fade.

Though nature did the same to thee ordaine,
But not true Louers sute for to disdaine.

So vnder freshest flowers the Adder lay,
So Hyble hath honie commixt with galle:

Trust not to forme, which with ripe flowers decay,
Forlake thy pride, for pride wil haue a fall.

And while the same in prime doth flourish most,
Loose not the time in vaine, thou crau'st being lost.

Vse thy good giftes while thou hast time (each thing
By reason of his vse commended is)

For withered age deformity will bring,
Too late thou wailest when thou doest find the mis

Of thy faire face, to wrinkled furrowes turnde,
And thy bright hew with Phoebus beames being burnde,

How oft in glasse wilt thou behold the same,
And then condemne the follie of thy youth:

That would not hunt, while time affoorded game,
Then shalt thou find the prouerb old a truth,

Which euer was, is, and so will be alwayes,
That time and tyde for no mans pleasure stayer.

But why poure I my plaintes vnto the wind:

Why doe I throwe my seed to barren lande:

I strue in vaine, of fate some fauor to find,

That cruel is my hap for to withstand

Fate, more than gold or gentry doth loue haile,

This scornes the Prince, when subiects do preuaile.

And though more fyence then serpent thou be set,

Me to annoy that am thy carefull thrall:

For with thy frownes my inward soule doth fret,

Yet

The strange Aduentures

Yet will I wait, and eke attend thy call,
And loue thee still, which in my heart shalt rest,
For Merfa alone in mind and mouth is prest.

Hymon having thus ended his song, wrapped in a mind full of impatient thoughtes, was ready with the Swan to forsake his life, for very feare of the future iudgments, which immediately he was to receiue. And Phyletas picked forwarde with no meane desire of putting in his plea, and in some good hope of a fauourable sentence, for that he was a bonier swaine, and more quaint than all the rest, & therefore was more in countenance fauoured of Merfa. Having deliberated a pretty while in tuning his instrument, he fell to his musicke, thus.

P H I L E T A S song.

Merfa, more white than flowre, or new burnt lime,
Or raging salt-sea fume, or milke reboylde:
More red than Cherries, ripe by force of time,
Or Berries yet with taint of blacke not soyld:
More faire than flowring trees in spring of yeare,
More sweete than figges, that new and ripe appeare.

Such pappes had Venus none, such rolling eyes,
Such cherrie lips, both sweet and fine in tutch:
Why should I praise her soft and wel made thyes,
For better were to feele than talke of such.
Both Goddes and men therewith enamoured be,
For with mine eyes a Satyre I did see,

Pursuing her, whom tane, he forste to yeeld,
Shce clamor made, then aide I would haue brought,
But to defend my selfe I had no sheeld,
Against his force, that with his hornes me sought,
Of such a Riual fierce I durst not proue,
The mighty force, though pining for her loue,

The strange Aduentures

Oh then how oft with signes she beckt at me,
And when I came me clipt in tender sort,
Euen as the vine or luie claspes the tree,
And wanton-like did bite my lippe in sport,
And flapt me on the mouth with decent grace,
Firme vowing then none other to embrace.
But what alas all this is now forgot,
And she againe recovered libertie,
I seem'd then fine, but now a foolish sot:
For that she weighes none of my miserie.
To serue her turne my seruice could her please;
But nought at all my bondage to release.

PHiletas had yet skant made an ende of his song, when as they might beare a great rushing amongst the bushes, and presently there appeared vnto them, a great Gyant of a maruellous huge stature, carrying in his hand a mightie mace of yron knotted, to the which was made fast two or thre chaynes with great Iron balles in the ende thereof: this huge monster so terrified the poore swaynes, that they made great haste to runne away, and he with a roaring and hollow voyce moze liker a diuell then a man, called on Meria to stay, saying that no defence were it euer so strong, could shrowde her from him: whereupon the valiant Priscus (nothing dismayed at the matter) stept vnto this vglie fiend, and hauing his fine Morglay readie drawn, he quickly sheathed in the Gyants bellie, who was vnarmed, whereupon he gaue such a horrible grone, as though heauen and earth had met together, and therewithall with his mightie Club began to lay about him, but Priscus being light and nimble did easily auoid his blowes, and againe lent him such another wound with his cutting sworde, that hee seuered life from his vnweltie limmes. Whereupon he called againe the shepherdes, which were not farre off and saue all which happened, whereof they were very glad, and tolde Priscus howe he had slaine the great Albanus, who continually many peeres before, together with a multitude of thieuish companions, and a sonne which he had much like him selfe, or rather moze monstrous,

of the blacke Knight.

monstrous, robbed and spoyled all the inhabitants thereabout, and trauellers that passed that way: wherefore they aduised him to get away with speed, least he should be ouertaken by the cruel Calfurnio Albanus sonne, and his lewde and thieuiſh complices, so happily he might be dyinen to stay when he would willingly be gone. Priscus smiling at their seruile feare, and ayming at nothing but honour, armed him selfe with the resolution of an inuincible mind, and so taking a fine Iuozie horne that hanged about Albanus necke, he bade the shepheardes adewe, and thanked them very often for their kindnesse, and then mounted againe vpon his horse, and rode away very swiftly towards the Forrest, to the end to finde out Calfurnio and the rest of his crewe, and the rather to meete with them, he wynded the horne which he had taken from Albanus, thinking that they would quickly repaire to the sound thereof, which was wont very often to be the call of their leader, thus hallowing and howling like a huntelman, in the end he recouered the Forrest againe, where entring to a fayre greene chafe, he might espye a great number of men, and amongst the rest one great deformed Gyant, which presently he perceiued to be the sonne of Albanus and his companie: all which were gathered together in a flocke about one alone Knight, who dealt amongst them many deadly blowes, and sent their groning spirites to keepe holyday to the damned and infernall ghostes, yet Calfurnio was so surd, that he lent the Knight many a dangerous buffet, with a bigge stiffe clubbe which he had. Priscus stoode a long while wondering at the great courage of the strange Knight, that so manfully behaued him selfe amongst so great a company of barbarous and rude people. And then made haste to assist him, lest vpon a sudden he should receiue any dammage amongst those vnciuill monsters. And thus enflamed with a desire to make a quicke dispatch of them all, he out with his sword and alighted from his horse, and then quickly made a way through the thickest of them, till he came side by side with the strange Knight, where he lent such a friendly assistance vnto him, that they were quickly rid of their enemies: for the most part they slewe, and the rest fled away. The strange Knight which thus was in combat with Calfurnio and his company, was Moderatus, who (while he tooke his rest in Albania, staying his messengers returne from Flo-

C 3

rence,

The strange Aduentures

rence with answer from pꝛince Perduratus, concerning the triumph which he was to perfoꝛme there) hearing repoꝛt of Albanus and Cal-furnios great outrage, and mischiefes committed against the inhabi-tants thereabouts, was come there secretly al alone to seek out those hel-hounds, which he dealt withall, when Priscus came to assiste him. Moderatus seeing no moze to be done, and that he had vanquished his enemies, he turned vnto Priscus, with an intent to giue him thankes foꝛ his kind succour offred vnto him, in time of so great need: but loo-king vpon him, he pꝛesently knew him by a deuise which he had in his armour, whereupon he was stricken into a great admiration of his bounty, & ioy of his pꝛesence, which bzought him almost besides himself foꝛ pure ioy: And pꝛesently taking away his owne helmet, hee discoue-red himselfe to Priscus, by this each of them knew another: weepe and imbrace they did, and what moze (Gentlemen) I leaue to your imagi-nations, that obserue and keep sacred, a faithfull and vnspotted league of true and perfect friendship: foꝛ truly better may a man conceiue in his mind, than set fooꝛth with his pen, the vnspeakable kinde salutati-ons, friendly greetings, gentle embracing, recyting of sorrowfull ad-uentures, in ech others absence, and reioycing now at last in their so happy meeting. All which was so perfect a map of pure and vnspotted loyalty, that assuredly it was no lesse than admirable, to behold the mo-tions of their rare and feruent dispositions. And after they had thozow-ly reioyced, in ech others pꝛesence, they began to reckon by of either side the aduentures hapned vnto them since their parting.

And first, Moderatus shewed all the course of his pilgrimage, his coming to Aemulia, Priscus fathers court, how he had defended his sister Modesta from death and infamie, discovering withall his affe-ction towards her, his departure again from Lothus court, his trauel in the Forrest Esina, Modestas letter sent vnto him by Perio, his re-turue towards Aemulia again, the repoꝛt of the great triumph con-cerning Modesta, the which was also to be perfoꝛmed at Florence, in his owne fathers court, who was now restozed to his ancient honoꝛ and liuing againe: Bergamos posseling of Modesta, his pꝛoceeding foꝛwards with her towards Florence, to finish the enterpꝛise: and how himself met with him, and entring the combat, bereaued him of his life, and thereby got the custodꝛ and pꝛotectiō of his sister Modesta,
and

of the blacke Knight:

and how he was now to perforce that begun enterprise: and by King Lothus proclamation, if he finished the same, he was to haue his faire sister Modesta for his wife, who nowe together with the rest of his company, he had left at a village called Albania, that was hard adioyning to that Forrest. And when Moderatus had from point to point thus discoursed at large of al matters vnto his friend, Priscus was more ioyfull than before, first in that his sister was deliuered from the false and treacherous accusations of Delamure, and also because hee was like to haue Moderatus for his brother in law, that he loued aboue all men in the worlde, and therefore Priscus returned him this salutation.

Happy be this day wherein such number of ioyes doe concurre together: for beleue me Moderatus, if the monarchy of the whol worlde had bene granted vnto me, I would not haue bene so glad, as of these tydings you do bring me, with your self, the which alone had bene sufficient to yeeld me more contentment, than I am able to vtter, much sorow haue I sustained by reason of thy absence, and more was the sorow I conceaned, when dissembling Florida vpon receit of thy letter, & knowledge of thy departure, giuing mee a friendly countenance accepted of my seruice, and being thoroughly entred into acquaintance with her, shewed me the same letter sent vnto her in my behalfe, assuredly if al the furies together had conferred to deuise the greatest torture that could be found, all that inflicted vpon mee at once, could not haue plagued me more: But yet all did not grieue me so much then, as it ioyeth my heart now that it was so, because I am in good hope that it was a heauenly decree, to unite our loues with more ample scope of friendship, for besides the likelihood you are in to wed Modesta, (as no doubt the Fates cannot be so iniurious to preuent it) I do greatly honoꝝ and loue Verosa your sister, who was the only comfort I had, whilst I remayned in Albigena. And now sith your father and my honorable good Lord Perduratus is so happily restored to his liuing and honour againe, and that you are here, which I know will assist me in any honest action, I make no doubt to obtaine her loue, if it be not that Cornelius Dnke Deuascos sonne is Lorde of her hart already: some lpyking was betwecne them, but how it prooued after my departure I know not,

The strange Aduentures

Priscus departure towards Florence, Answer from Perdura-
tus to the blacke Knight his message. His arriual to Florence.
Likewise the arriual of CORNELI'VS and diuerse others of
Duke DEVASCOS Court there. PRISCVS presented AL-
BANVS head to the Gouvernour. The blacke Knightes first
dayes triumph. Chap. 16.

When they had thus debated betweene themselues, of all
the accidents happened vnto them, after their parting they
determined that Priscus should carrie the head of great Al-
banus vnto Florence, and present it vnto Perduratus, making him-
selfe known vnto him, and no doubt he should be very welcome. And
Moderatus wished him not to make any shewe of acquaintance with
him before this triumph should be finished, at what time he meant to
discouer him selfe, and not before: whereupon the day being farre
spent, Priscus returned to the place where he had left Albanus dead,
and there striking off his head, he tooke his readiest way to Florence.
And Moderatus, making no semblance of any trauell, taken in sub-
duing those barbarous people, came again to Albania, by what time
his messenger was returned from Florence, with this answer from
Perduratus, that the daughter of mightie Lothus King of Aemulia,
and her Champion was very welcome to his Court, giuing them
great thanks, that they did honour him so much, as to make choyce
of his Pallace, for the performing of so honourable an enter-
prise.

When Moderatus had receiued this answer from the noble
Perduratus, he presently set forward towards Florence, where be-
ing come, he found lodging taken vp for him by his messenger, very
neere adioyning to the Lordes pallace, where he alighted. And his
intent being adreadie published, there was preparation made for stan-
dings, to viewe the sequell of this Tournament, and all thinges else
that were necessarie and belonged thereunto: company continually
repaired thither from all places: and amongst others, Cornelius,
Deualoyes, and the rest of their company from Deuascos Court,
came thither and were exceedingly well entertained. And Priscus a
little while after them came thither also, and presented Perduratus
with

of the blacke Knight.

with Albanus head, who gaue him most hartie welcome, and reioyced much in his comming, marueiling not a little at his great bountie, and valure, in performing so notable an exploit, al seemed greatlie to admire at the hugenessse of the head, by that one part gelling at the proportion of the rest, which they iudged to bee verie monstrous, and almost vnpossible to bee subdued by any humane power. And when they had a while busied their bzaines on this matter, more Lords and knights of great account repaired there: for that the very next day this triumph of iusting and turnament did begin. When Phoebus had bathed his angrie steeds in the wide Ocean, and that Hesperus appeared in the West, then time of rest approached, and all ceased from their day labours, till that Titan starting from vnder the cloudes, discovered Thetis escape with Neptune, the euery body prepared themselves to be diligent in his function, & Perduratus sent for the blacke Knight (for so Moderatus would haue himselfe called) and his Ladie to come to the Lystes, who were very ready, and the Knight armed and mounted, gaue direction for the conducting of Modesta there, who being placed in a seat appointed for her to behold **A** which shuld happen, her garde standing in order about her seat, the black Knight called for a speare to his page, which being had, he managed his horse by and downe the lystes, expecting a champion, that in regard of his mistresse fauour, would maintaine her beauty against him. And not long after Perduratus and his Nobles placed themselves right against Modesta, of the other side of the lystes, and Flaminea, and all the troupe of her Ladies, her daughter Verosa, with her cousen Byfancia, who far stayned all the rest in beautie, came in and seuered themselves into partes, Flaminea and the ancient matrones of the one side of Modestas seat, And Verosa with the rest of the young Ladies on her left side. Here you might behold loue and beautie, peace and warre, yea Mars and Venus triumphing in a sympathy of decent and rare perfections, so gloriois was the sight, so singular was the modestie, so resolute was the magnanimity, that here was to be found at this instant, that it might be doubted whether Venus with all her wantons, Diana with all her traine, and Mars with all his Marshalls were ther present: but howsoeuer, they being all thus seated, there came forth the Dukes sonne of Panonie, in greene armour, and the picture

The strange Aduentures

picture of Hope engrauen in his crest, and vnderneath written in letters of gold, *Solum iolamen Spes*, hee was mounted vpon a milke-white horse, his saddle was green, & foreplate of beaten golde, his caparisons correspondent to the same, very richly powdered with Orientall pearls and pretious stones that were much worth, and of great estimation, two pages apparelled all in red, the one bore his speare on the one side of him, and on the other side, the other carried his Target. And before him did ride vpon a fine Jennet, a marvellous beautiful and fine child, apparelled all in white, and carrying in his hands the picture of faire Helena, Queene of Corinth, and vnderneath the same written in faire capitall letters, this posie, *Negat quis meam Helenam esse pulcherrimam? cum gladio hoc dubium resoluam.* And whē he had gone in this order twice about the court, Tersimano (for so the young Lord of Pannonie was called) tooke the picture in his own handes, and hanged it vpon a pillar that was set vp for that purpose, right opposit against Modesta, & hauing so done, he drew neere to the black Knight, who seeing him comming did salute him thus. Noble Heroes, & worthy knight, being vnkown vnto me, so I dare call thee, for more thou canst not be, & thy countenance and demanour doth warrant thee so much, I had rather our saluation shuld be words than blowes, & friendship than contention, but sith I haue undertaken to maintain Modesta, the daughter of mightie Lothus king of Emilia, to be the fayrest of al faire, and to be the only flower of beauty this day liuing, whose presence here before you is an eie witnesse, to warrant my resolution to be lawfull, I must needs to maintain mine honour, which is my greatest patrimony, combat with al that wil say the contrary. Tersimano noting the bounty of the blacke Knight, with his goodly personage and gentle disposition, returned him this shorte answer. Worthy Knight, sith to perswade you to leaue this intollerable errour you are in, is too great a charge for me, I cannot choose but bee sorrie, and to witnesse the right to bee on my side, beholde the picture of the second Hellena, but farre excellling in bounty the Queene of Greece, and the causer of the Troians wrack, vnto whome if you wil not yeeld her due, let vs no longer stay, but trie the quarrell by Armes: whereupon they parted one from another, and then the Trumpets sounded, the neighing horses mad with anger, besprinkled their riders with the coming froth of their boyling stomacks, and both

Of the blacke Knight:

these resolute and valiant Champions couthing their speares in their rests, spurred their angrie Coursers to gallop as swift as the winde, who meeting in the midst of their course, shiuered their mightie speares, the splinters whereof flying in the ayre, into many peeces no bigger thā the smallest chips notwithstanding they made no more motions in their seates, than if man, saddle, horse and all had bene one solide and entire body. And to speak the substance of the whole in a word long and perillous was this combat, for it lasted all the morning, till it drew towards high noone, at what time the black Knight doubled his blowes with great dexterity, his strength nothing abated, but of the other side Tersimano had his armour crased and broken in diuers places, and therefore receiued greater damage than the black Knight, whose armour was so good, that no weapon could pearce, and in the end sent Tersimano such a blowe vpon his helme, that hee brought him quite out of his remembrance, wherupon he fastned hold in the raines of his bridle, & unlaced his helmet, & plucked it off, and seeing the good knight to auoid a great deal of blood at his mouth, he sorrowed very much, fearing least his life should bee in some danger, and therfore called for help vnto him, & shortly recouered him againe, who seeing himself in his enemies hands, & ouercome in that honorable assemblie, had much adoe to saue himself from sounding againe: but yet like a wise man, seeing it was not boot to kicke against the sharpe, he peeled vnto Fortune, & thanked the black Knight for his gentleness, confessing himself to be ouercome both by his bounty & valour, and also by his singular and rare curtesie: wherupon al the companie dissolved the black Knight and his Lady to their lodging, their attendants following them. And the Lord Perduratus, & al the rest of the company as wel strange and forren princes and knights there assembled, as also his own Nobles & countenmen, went to his pallace invited of him there to remain continually, during the time of this Tusting and tournament, where they were royally feasted. At this morning Cornelius, Deualoys & Priscus kept cōpany with Perduratus (to view this braue combat) who had so effectually dealt with thē (because his deer friends) that he won thē not to aduēture thēselues against Modestas chāpion, before the time limited shuld be neer expired, & therfore they had now good opportunity to glut their eies with the glorious hue of most rare beauties,

The strange Aduentures

beauties, which was the onley object of their delights: whereupon Cornelius glancing towards Verosa (with whome hee had but little conference after his coming to Florence) hapned to espie faire Bysantia, who sitting next to her cousen Verosa, stayned both her, & al the rest of the company in beautie, as much as Phoebus in brightnes doth excell the least starre in the firmament. Herewith Cornelius hauing handled the pitch, was defiled therewith, for he that is subiect to change wil soone finde a choice, whose amours are alwayes like the Camelion, that is of euery colour, and so they, subiect to the dart of of euery beauty which they behold.

Cornelius loue to Bysantia, and Priscus affection to Verosa,

CORNELIUS and DEVALOYES conference with BYSANTIA and VEROSA: the complaint of VEROSA for CORNELIUS inconstancie, and disswading of her cousen BYSANTIA from his loue: PRISCUS conference with VEROSA, and opening of his fancie vnto her, the vniting of their loues, agreeing in sympathie of their desires.

Chap. 17

This fickle Changling thus mooued with the star-bright beautie of Bysantia, longed very much to assay if his traine would take fire, doubting least his friendship with Verosa would be a great let vnto him in this enterprise. And therefore to keep her occupied, he wished his cousen Deualoyes to bee doing with her, who yeelded vnto his request, & concluded to put this in practise of either side when opportunity would giue them leaue. Priscus was not idle al this while, for he did also cast in his mind howe to compasse the fauour of Verosa, greatly doubting thereof, because Cornelius was present, yet much animated, knowing his stay in Florence to be short, after whose departure, hee was in some better hope to recouer his desire. These new entertained seruants of Venus, more busied themselves with such frivolous cogitations, than in noting this braue and resolute combate between the blacke Knight and Tersimano, but being thus finished, Priscus was very glad that his friend had so happylic performed this dayes worke, although (for feare to discouer his friend) hee kept his ioy secret to himselfe.

Repast being taken, and dinner ended, Cornelius and Deualoyes
(although

of the blacke Knight.

(although befoze this time they neuer seperated company with Priscus since their coming to Florence for olde acquaintance sake) singled themselves, and went about with their cunning flatterers to entrap the silly and innocent Ladies, whom happily, according to their expectation they met within a place conuenient, to impart their mindes vnto. Cornelius taking Bysantia by the arme, and Deualoyes Verosa, they spent great part of this afternoone thus together, walking in the priuy garden, where by chance they had ouertaken the two Ladies, taking the benefite of the fresh aire. Verosa seeing her loue Cornelius to court another, making no semblance of friendship or dalliance with her, albeit at the first she was pleasant to Deualoyes, contented to take the aire of the fire to drive away infectious humors, although she meant not to burne befoze she would be reclaimed from that errour, seeing Cornelius to be such a changeling, and that she found her selfe wronged by him, she determined not lightly to beleue any Ligurian Courtier for his sake againe. And now repenting to haue built vpon so slender a foundation, very wisely and discretely she sorrowed not so much, because she could not better holde a sliding shadow, or to speake more trulie, fickle and vnstayed substance: and therefore resolued not to wade further than she knew howe to returne, nor to trust befoze she had good triall, in the end cloyed with his flatterie, and not well pleased with Cornelius presence, whose light and wauering disposition she now farre more abhorred, than euer shee was in loue with his person, shee did shake vp Deualoyes with such short and quipping answeres, that now he found hee had met with his match: and thereupon Verosa with a flea in her care, parted company with them vpon a suddaine, whereby she interrupted the contented delight of Cornelius and Bysantia, who did well agree together: for Bysantia was ignorant of any friendship between her cousin Verosa and Cornelius, and knowing him to bee descended of so noble a progenie, measured his secreete and priuate intentions, by his outward apparition, and being something credulous, she gaue him friendly entertainment, who being in the depth of their conference, were first to parte with a short vale: for Bysantia would not stay after her cousin there. But Verosa in this choller made such haste, that she recovered her chamber, befoze Bysantia was out of the garden, who mended her

The strange Aduentures

pace to ouertake her cousen, yet came short, but being at the entrance of her chamber, she could heare Verosa warbling with her lute this ensuing fancie.

WHat fancies foule doth fillie maydes entise,
To like and loue the false and flattering wight,
What Viper would the selfe same thing dispise,
Which erst he fought with all his force and might:
But fond I was, and fickle his desire,
Like bauens blaze, that soone was set on fire,

Such fire it was that wrought my deep annoy,
Such foole I was, that credulous would proue:
And trust repose, in him that did but toy,
And full of lust would counterfeit some loue,
Loe to my care with grieve of heart I find,
His flattering words, which were but blasts of wind.

What Cockatrice, so pleasant once could smile,
And couer fraud with such a glorious baite:
Who would haue thought such beautie couered guile,
But Fowlers still their snares being laid, do wait,
And counterfeit, the sillie birds to trap,
So did this wretch, the more is my ill hap.

BYsantia entered the chamber (before Verosa scant had breathed some few sighs after this sorrowful dittie) & asked her cousen why she started away vpon the sudden, hauing vnderstood somewhat by her song, which she ouerheard, she charged her with iealousie, adding further that if she did beare any mind to Cornelius, her self would repulse him in his sute, & giue him no more hope of obtaining her good wil. Then quoth Verosa, I pray God you be not more iealous than I am, when you shal find Cornelius but a flatterer: for surely hee hath promised as much or more vnto me (I am perswaded) than euer hee wil perform with any: wherefore take heed, for you may wel know, the Rose hath his prick, the Lawe his back, the deadliest Adder lurketh in

of the blacke Knight.

in the finest grasse, & the greatest deceir is alwayes couered with the
fayrest speeches: trust not afoze you trie, for feare thy repentance shuld
come too late: and as for me I am indifferent, for I had rather want
than be cumbred with such a fickle friend, whose fancies be moze in
number than his yeares, & his yeares ouer many to be thus nussed in
the fude of wind-wauering inconstancy: wherefore Bysantia, thou art
ols ynough to warm by the fire and not burne, to look vpon the Adier
with her pide skin, and not to handle her sting, to make a differēce be-
tween a flattering parasit, & a faithfull & indissembeling mind. And ha-
uing a while debated vpon this matter, Verosa perceiuing by this li-
tle discourse (that had in this behalfe passed betwex Bysantia and her
selfe) that she had rather looke vpon the Panther, than come within
his breath, gaue her the scope of aduising her selfe, and so leauing the
chamber of Verosa, they went soozth to see what stirring there was
abroad, and at their first sight, they met with Priscus walking alone
in an outer gallery, not far from Verolas chamber, who came there of
purpose to espie opportunitie to discouer his affections vnto her: who
at their first meeting gaue him verie friendly entertainment, and de-
sirous to confer with him singly, desired her cossen Bysantia to spare
them a little time, who presently left them together to determine of
new salues for their olde sores: for Verosa knew well of the loue hee
had bozne to Florida, and her disdainfull unkindnes vnto him. And fin-
ding her selfe in like sozt agreed with the wauering and fickle dis-
position of Cornelius, she disclosed the whole euent of the matter vnto
him, as being both assured of his fidelitie, vnto whom she discovered
herselfe, and also knowing that Priscus woulde ioyne with her in com-
plaint, being in like sozt deluded by Florida, as she had bene with the
dissimulation of Cornelius, burst forth with great vehemency to ex-
claime against his wauering inconstancie. Priscus giuing attentiu eare
hereunto, was the gladdest man in the world, to find Verosa in this
predicament. And where before hee doubted but Cornelius his pre-
sence, now he found that let remooued, and therefore was boide to open
his griefs vnto her, which he discoursed with her in this sozt.

My deare Verosa, and only deare vnto me, because Verosa, is it
possible that the Vine should beare the fruit of a brāble: the pear tree
a crab: & that vertuous Deuasco shuld haue such vicious chickens as

The strange Aduentures

Cornelius and Florida, nay rather I thinke they be changed & none of his bloud, or els they were borne vnder some malignant Planet, whose aspectes predominate ouer their natiuities, were contrary to all humanity, nussing them vp in the bower of inconstancie. Wherefore (my sweet Verosa) let vs rather reioyce than bee sorrie, to bee rid of such wauering Kyttes, and fickle changelings, whose voyces inchaunt like Syrens, and sight p̄iudice like the Basiliske, alluring with their melodie, and inchaunting with their sorcerie, that sooner may one surfet of their cancred spites, than euer haue any iust cause to triumph with true delights. And least we should so farre wade in their inconstancie, that we might be in danger of loosing ourselues therein, and withal should so long parlie of the dissimulations of flattering louers, till we should sauour of their hypocrisie, and so transnature our selues with custome, to execute a vile and base office, let vs therefore leaue them to their fancies, which is as hot as wild fyre in shew, and as cold as Ice in operation.

Priscus made here an vnperfect period, throbbing out many sighs, to ease his wearied and panting heart, and hauing perfectly taken bzeath, that he was able to speake, he glaunced to Verosa some parte of his affection, assuring her that his loue was in no fleshly fantasie, but a meere choysse of chastitie, founded vpon the rocke of faith, and builded with constancie, onely led therunto by the singular vertue, which so shined in al her actions (like the glowing worm in the night) that it lighted him out of the bottomlesse dangeon of darke despair: he shewed also vnto her how the great and loyall amity, between him and her brother Moderatus, was a spurre which still prickt him forwards, to compasse a meane to be tyed with perpetuall vnion to him and his for euer.

Here Priscus paused againe, and Verosa noting his suddaine sighes, his solempne protestations, and strange passions, well knowing the man to be of a vertuous and rare disposition, whome she alwayes affected for the same, and her brother Moderatus great friende, and therefore must the rather be fauoured of her (making no doubt of his constancie, whose faith already had obtaiued credite sufficient to discharge the same) after some fewe protestations, to ground in him a good opinion towards her (which was needlesse, being already so p̄emptory

of the blacke Knight.

remptory in that point, that he iudged Verosa only beautifull, onelie wise, and only vertuous) shee made it not coy to confesse vnto him, that she would requite his loue with the like, so farre as with modesty and her parents consent she might, to whome she was in dutie and obedience bound.

Priscus was so wel pleased with this answer, that hee would suffer her to proceed no further, but raiſhed with ioy of this happy meeting, disclosed how that in defence of his sisters beauty, her brother Moderatus was the Champion to perform that honorable triumph: leauing vnrecited no act or circumstance either of his friends (and her brother) after their departure from Albigena, coniuring her not to disclose any of these secretes, til the substance of the whole being ripe, she might behold the conclusion of a most excellent and rare exigent: and so sealing his bargaine with a secrete kisse on her sweet lips, hee tooke his leaue for that time, both of her and Bysantia, and so rested to expect further aduentures the next morning.

Perduratus, the Gouvernor of Florence his proclamation, that none should enter the combat, but iust only: the blacke Knights famous victories and his deedes at armes encreasing to the end, PERDVRA TVS his remembrance of his sonne MODERATVS, in beholding the hountie of the blacke Knight. The black Knights conference with his friend PRISCVS and MODESTA his sister, how to discover himselfe to his father: MODESTAS oration to PERDVRA TVS, wherein she discovereth the loue betweene PRISCVS and VEROSA, and also giueth the Gouvernour of FLORENCE to vnderstand, that the black Knight was MODERATVS, his sonne, the ioy thereof, and the celebration of both mariages. Chap. 18.

The noble Perduratus, foreseeing (very wisely) by admitting all to the combat of the sword, there might growe great inconuience, wherein so many worthy and valorous Knights should be brought into such an extreame perill, and vnpossible but that some of them should miscarry, did therefore make a solemne proclamation to be made, that no man either forriners or countreimen, should presume afterward to enter the combate with the sword, without his special licence, but to trie their knightly promise by iusting only, and

The strange Aduentures

no otherwise, after which commandement was published abroad, all determined to obey the same, and the blacke Knight being ready in the field, expecting a Competitor, there repayed diuers, as wel princes of great renowne, as worthy knights of peremptory resolutions, trying their marshal skil with that inuincible champion, who daylie got the honour of the field, and so well behaued himselfe in that honourable exercise, that very few scaped unhorsed the first encounter, so that after two or three dayes were expired, he had verie little to doe, for that the few remayning unfoyled by him were affraid to aduventure themselves, least they should be discredited thereby. In this meane time Cornelius and Deualoyes had good opportunity to court their Mistresses, which they did with great diligence, but notwithstanding all their dissembling flatteries could not preuaile: for that Verosa being once burned, would not handle the fire againe, and she had schooled her cousin Byfantia for being too credulous, so that these fickle changelings were descryed, and their welcome was thereafter: who perceiuing their sophistry would take no effect, they grew not onely melancholy, but also (as it were) desperate, and therfore the time of the triumph being expired, only one day remayning to make a final conclusion of all, they prepared themselves to hazard their credits, being in such fury, that they supposed no humaine power could withstand them, with this resolution hauing prepared Tawny armours for themselves (the badge and token of despised louers) after part of the day was spent, they came both to the fildes, and aduancing themselves to the place of Lyses, the black Knight was ready to receiue them: and so Cornelius ranne first, and broke his staffe vpon Modestas Champion verie gallantlie, but neuer shakt him in his seat: And the black Knight knowing Cornelius (for that he had some speeches with him befoze the Trumpets sounded) when they came to the encounter turned away the end of his staffe from him, whereat Cornelius was very wroth, thinking he had so done in disdain of him, & fetching his course the second time charged his staffe vpon him with a double force, but the good black Knight slenderly regarded his furie, passed by him in like sort as befoze, not offering any maner of encounter vnto him, nor yet receiuing any damage by the strong encounter of Cornelius, whereupon Deualoyes started to his cousin, and
per

of the blacke Knight:

perswaded him to leaue, and that he might trie himself with the black Knight, who as it seemed fauoured him, by reason of some olde acquaintance, as els was affraid to deale with him, and therefore wold offer him that occasion of kindnesse, whereby to auoyd further triall of his strength, with these perswasions Cornelius rested satisfied, and Deualoyes prepared himselfe to take his fortune, to finish and conclude this whole triumph: for the last houre therof was now at hand, and therewithall turning his horse about, spurred him to runne with great swiftnesse, and the black Knight perceiuing his purpose, gaue him the meeting, and the encounter was so rough, that Deualoyes measured his length vpon the ground: whereat he was greatly offended, and would haue drawne his sword, but that hee was commanded by the Judges to stay, both for that the time appoynted was now finished, and also because it was against the kings commandement, and then (patience perforce) Deualoyes was faine to stay his hand, notwithstanding that he had rather haue lost his life outright, than be so discredited in such an honourable assemblie.

The valour of the black Knight did put Perduratus in remembrance of his sonne Moderatus (whom in marshall actiuitie (as hee supposed) he did much resemble) and that rack-master Remembrance torturing with great extremitie his mind in thinking thereof, but neuerthelesse (like a wise man) dissembling his griefe, least thereby his guests would not think themselves welcom, when they should see him melancholie, he took al things patiently, and sent a messenger to desire the black Knight and his Lady Modesta to supper, whereby they might see if his skill in carpet trade were equiualent with his marshall discipline, the blacke Knight accepted of his bidding, and promised to satisfie his expectation, who after the messengers departure was at great warres in his mind, how he might discouer himselfe to his Parents: in the end Priscus being then present with him, they determined that Modesta should be first conducted to the Prince, who following certaine instructions they gaue her, shoulde open all the matter vnto them, which she assented vnto, and then being conducted by priscus to Perduratus presence, after that she had demaunded licence to speake, she framed her speach vnto him in this manner.

The strange Aduentures

11

Worthy and renowned Vice-roy, the mirrour of true nobilitie, and the lanterne of perfect vertue to all Christian Princes, I haue by the direction of King Lothus my father, arrived here to your court, where I came vnder the conduct of a worthy knight, who by mine owne consent, and his great merite, hath wonne me to be his for euer: from him, and in mine owne name also do I salute you, and your Ladie Flaminea, wishing you both long life, health, and happines, to further these new erected buildings, and their possessors, and to eternize your owne worthines in the Annales of perpetuall honour: I bring tydings (O victorious Prince) which I knowe will be no lesse welcome vnto your Highnesse, than they are profitable and pleasing to your subiects, yea such tydings as I doubt not the child vnborne shall haue iust cause to reioyce therein, but before I discouer so great a secrecie, I am to craue a gift of your royal Maiestie, in granting whereof you shall augment your owne fame, encrease your owne power, and enlarge the territories of your dominions, where of the other side in denying my request, you should not only do iniustice, but also reape dishonour, in doing lesse than honoꝝ and vertue commandeth.

I am to make this request for one that nature bindeth you not to denie, and for one that honoꝝ and pollicie commaundeth you to yeeld vnto his desire, whose good wil being obtayned, Perduratus may brag of happinesse with the mightiest Prince in Europe.

Then know noble Heroyes, that here I present you and the Lady Flaminea, with noble and victorious Lothus his sonne and heire, Moderatus his dearest friende liuing, I say, I present your excellency with Priscus my brother, who hath vowed to bee a husband to Verosa, or neuer to be any: who deserueth Verosa, for that hee loueth Verosa so well, who is not hated of Verosa, because Verosa knoweth already so much, and willingly accepted thereof. Now you know him, I leaue for you to iudge whether hee deserueth Verosa. And yet famous Prince, I bring better newes, for that I present Priscus vnto you from the thise worthy Knight, whose valiant deeds at armes, hath made his name famous in the worlde, in vanquishing proud and arrogant Delamure, (whose very name was a terrour to all Aemulia) who falsly accused mee of fornication, being innocent therein: in destroying the monstrous Gyaut Bergamo, that got such honoꝝ

of the blacke Knight.

honor in my fathers court in performing the first part of this trifun-
which now is happily atchieued by him, in bitterly rooting out
mischieuous tree of deuillish Albanus: Priscus my brother and his
freend by good fortune conducted to the place where those barbarous
people charged him with a number of vncutaneous blowes: yea from
him I come to make this request, that desireth rather to gaine ver-
tuous honour secretly, than to make any ambitious ostentation ther-
of publickly. And therefore, least I should holde you longer from your
deserued ioy, and desired expectation than stood with reason, knowe
(victorious Prince) that I come from my Champion, my heartes
ioy, and your right renowned sonne Moderatus, from him I come
who in my Fathers presence (as you all will witnesse) hath gained
to himselfe perpetuall honour: All these things considered, I ex-
pect Verolas acceptance, and your royall consents, and then all is
perfected to make happy two kingdoms.

I leaue to your iudgmentes (Gentlemen) whether Perduratus
and Flaminea had not iust cause to reioyce in these so gratefull and
prosperous newes, not onely in finding their lost sonne againe, but al-
so in so honourable and worthy a match, both to Moderatus and
Verola: so that all these ioyes concurring together in one, stirred
in them such ouer-ardent delight, that the behemencie thereof berea-
ued them from the vse of their speach for a long time: In the end,
the tydiuges being verie welcome vnto them, all the whole courte
there assembled, reioycing likewise at these prosperous newes. Per-
duratus first commaunded his sonne to bee sent for, who being come,
fell vpon his knees to his father, crauing pardon for his suddaine
departure, his so long absence, and the concealing of himselfe so long
from his Fathers court, who (carrying with him sufficient reasons,
to excuse himselfe, though no more than his owne presence, which
verie often (with bitter teares of his Parentes) was desired) was
kindly embraced, and louingly entertained of his noble Parentes,
who neuer sufficientlie satisfied in beholding of him, watered their
cheekes with abundance of salt teares, for ioy thereof. And in the
end recouering their speach againe, they returned vnto Modesta
many kinde thanks, with verie friendlie and gracious acceptance of
her franke and gentle offer. Whereupon order was taken, to make

The strange Adventures

Things in a readinesse, for the solemnizing of the Nuptials, aswell
and Moderatus and Modesta, as of Priscus and Verosa, to the greate
contentment of all Florence, and to the prosperous and happie state
thereof.

Cornelius and Denaloyes beholding all which happened, albe-
it at first they could not bee perswaded, but that they were in a
drame, yet calling themselves to better remembrance, they were
so disquieted in minde to beholde this sudden accident, that all the en-
treatie that Perduratus could make, was scant able to perswade
them to stay the consummation of the marriages: which being fini-
shed, they presentlie departed towards Albigena, leaving the Flo-
rentines to triumph in the multitude of their new ioyes.

FINIS. R. P. Cent,

Parre & A. H. or.
Richard

Imprinted at London by Richard Ihones, at the signe
of the Rose and Crowne, neer to S. Andrewes
Church in Holburne.

1595.



Rose

Richard

Elizabeth
Watson

Eliza
Elizabeth

W

